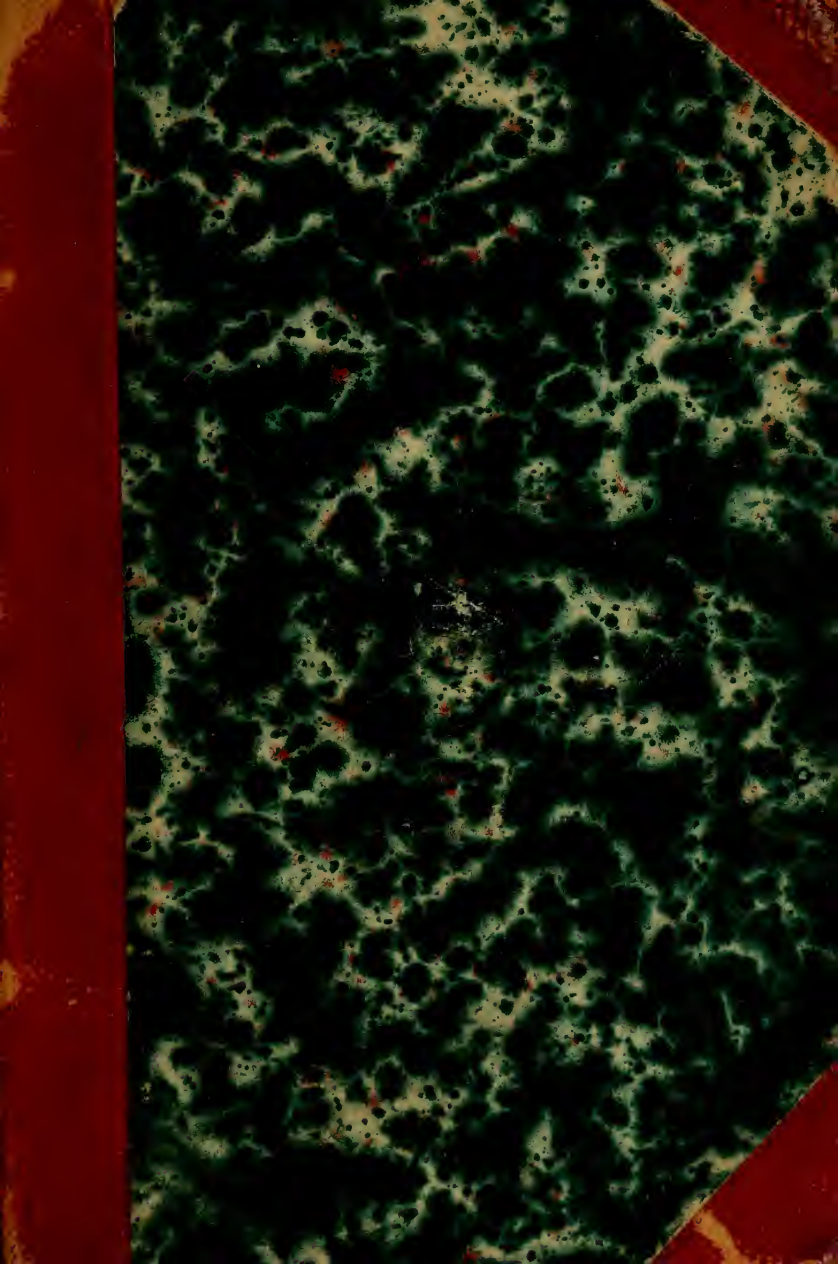




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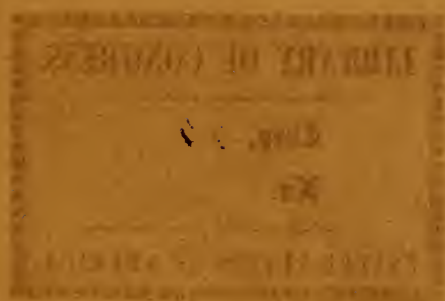
Chap. PS 2832

P2

No.

1854

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.







PAST MERIDIAN.

BY

MRS. L. H. SIGOURNEY.

“Ah! wherefore sigh for what is gone?
Or deem the future all a night?
From darkness through the rosy dawn,
The stars go singing into light:
And to the pilgrim lone and gray,
One thought shall come to cheer his breast,
The evening sun but fades away
To find new morning in the west.”

T. B. READ.



New York:

D. APPLETON & CO., 200 BROADWAY.

Boston:

J. P. JEWETT & CO., 117 WASHINGTON STREET.

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PS 2832

P2

1854

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1854, by

FRANCIS T. RUSSELL,

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PRINTED BY CASE, TIFFANY AND CO., HARTFORD, CT.

P R E F A C E.

It is not considered polite to ask people their age, after the bloom of youth has departed. I would not willingly violate the rules of decorum, or tempt any one to hide the foot-prints of Time as the Indian warrior covers his track with leaves. So, making no invidious inquiry, let me simply whisper in the ear of those who have achieved more than half life's journey, that this book is for them. It is their own exclusive property. It is devoted heart and hand to their interests. Whoever is found reading it, may be suspected to have attained the same ripe age.

It is, therefore, a kind of confidential matter between me and my compeers—we, whose faces are toward the setting sun. To all such, I offer the right hand of fellowship. There are sympa-

thies between us. We are in the same category—a joint stock concern that admits no young partners. Every camp has its watchword. Every state its history. Every profession its policy. And have not we ours? Aye, and our rights too? And shall we not stand for them? Come, let us see.

L. H. S.

HARTFORD, CONN.,
Sept. 1st, 1854.

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CHAPTER I.

The A. M.'s and the P. M.'s.

“ AH ! what concerns it him whose way
Lies upward to the immortal dead,
That a few hairs are turning gray ?
Or one more year of life hath fled ?
Swift years ! still teach us how to bear,
To feel, to act, with strength and skill,
To reason wisely, nobly dare,
Then speed your courses as ye will.
When life's meridian toils are done,
How calm, how rich the twilight glow,
The morning twilight of a sun
That shines not here, on things below.”

PROFESSOR NORTON.

THE equinoctial of human life, though vaguely defined, is not an imaginary line. Arithmetically speaking, thirty-five, as predicated on the allotted span of seventy years, is the true zenith. Yet life's latitude can not

always be computed with such exactness. Of Cuvier, it was said at sixty, that he was but in the climax of his scientific powers; and Klopstock, at eighty, bore the epithet of "the youth forever."

These instances are, indeed, but exceptions, and it will be, doubtless, admitted that the meridian of life is fully passed at fifty. It would be an exceedingly liberal construction to extend to sixty, the dividing line between the ante and the post meridian people. Though the boundary may slightly vary, yet the characteristics and possessions of those on each side of this debateable ground are sufficiently distinct.

With the A. M.'s, are the beauty and the vigor, and the ambition of this present world. Of these distinctions they are aware and tenacious.

Yet, the P. M.'s are not utterly cyphers. This, I trust, in due time to show. If with them, there is a less inflated hope, there should be a more rational happiness; for they

have winnowed the chaff from the wheat, and tested both what is worth pursuing, and worth possessing.

Is there any antagonism between these parties? Is one disposed to monopolize, and the other to consider itself depreciated? Does one complain that

“Superfluous lags the veteran on the stage?”

and the other morosely withdraw from the battle of life, and its reciprocities? We will not admit any just ground for such estrangement. Rather are they differing tenses of the same verb, the verb “*to love*,” whose root is in the blessed principle that binds the universe together. Children are they of the morning and of the evening, living on the bounty of one common Father, and lighted by the beams of the same rising and setting sun, to His home in Heaven.

The duties that devolve on the P. M.’s are not often as clearly evident, or as strongly enforced as those which appertain to their predecessors. One, comprise the planting,

the other the ripening process. In agriculture, the necessity of preparing the soil, and sowing right seed, is apparent and imperative. The requisitions to remove weeds, and destroy noxious insects, are equally obvious. But when the objects of culture approach their final maturity, vigilance declines. Still, the careful gardener will give the perfecting peach the shelter of a wall, or the clustering grape a prop, that it may better meet the sunbeam. The laborer knows that the golden sheaf needs the vertic sun, and the boy seeks not his nuts in the forest, till the frost opens their sheath.

So, in this our mortal life, though the toils that fit for action, are more obvious and pressing, yet the responsibilities of its period of repose, should be often and distinctly contemplated. For that richest fruit of the Creator, the soul of man, that which survives, when all other works of creation perish, goes on ripening and ripening as long as it hangs in this garden of time, and needs both earthly

and divine aid to bring it happily to the eternal garner.

It has been said that the ethics of age have been less elaborately stated than those of youth or maturity. Still, the most perfect philosophy, the most sublime precepts, must fail, without the example of a good life. The morality of Socrates and Seneca, was beautiful, but their times furnished no illustrations. The code of Confucius was fine, but lacked vitality. How much more impressive is the theory of Addison, he who was enabled to say at last, "Come, see in what peace a Christian can die."

"I know of but one way of fortifying the mind against gloomy presages and terrors, and that is, by securing the friendship of that Being who disposes of all events, and governs futurity. He sees at one view, the whole thread of my existence, not only that part of it which I have already passed through, but that which runs forward into the depths of eternity. When I lie down to sleep, I recommend myself to His care; when I awake I give myself up to His direction. Amidst all the evils that threaten me, I will look up to Him for help, and question not

but He will avert them, or turn them to my advantage. Though I know neither the time, nor the manner of the death that I am to die, I am not at all solicitous about it, because I am sure that He knows them both, and that He will not fail to support and comfort me under them."

A serenity thus founded and sustained, promotes the ripening of the soul's best fruits. Earthly perturbations check their full development, and may cause them to fall before their time. To pass through God's world, unreconciled, or in hostility to Him, is fearful arrogance. To estrange from His service the powers that He has given, or the affections that He claims, is treason heightened by ingratitude.

If this has been the case with any of us, let us lay aside the weapons of our warfare. When we first entered this pilgrimage, many paths allured us, each bright with flowers, and birds of hope. Some we followed, till the flowers faded, and the song ceased. Others we entered, and hastily retraced, finding only thorns and pitfalls. Now, approaching the

close of our probation, a single road strongly solicits us, one prominent object concentrates our desires, a happy entrance into the "house not made with hands!"

All along the way there is happiness for those whose hearts are in unison with the Divine will. With a prayer of penitence for the erring past,—with a hymn of faith for the joyous future, they pass onward, their Christian graces ripening day by day, under the "clear shining of the Sun of Righteousness." Thus may it be with us, until the last, bright drop of this brief existence shall be exhaled.

Those who have completed half a century, if not literally numbered among the aged, have yet reached a period of great gravity and importance. They should have gained an ascent which discloses much of earth's vanity. They have past life's meridian, and journey henceforth toward the gates of the west. Those who like tutelary spirits presided over their earliest years, and rejoiced in their blossoming promise, have long since

ceased their ministrations, or departed to their reward. For the responsibilities that remain, they must gird themselves, and help to gird others. To a future generation they should pay the debt which they have incurred from the past.

Time has also to them, a heightened and an increasing value. For should they reach threescore and ten, which it is computed that only five in one hundred of our race attain, or even far surmount the prescribed date of man, every year is said to gather fleetness as it approaches its goal. The rapidity of the tide of time has been well depicted by one of our own eloquent lecturers, the Rev. Henry Giles.

“There is no Gibeon in life, upon which we can rest for a moment, the morning or the noontide; there is no Ajalon in our age, whereon we can force the moonlight to repose beyond its appointed hour. We cannot rekindle the morning beams of childhood; we cannot recall the noontide glory of youth; we cannot bring back the perfect day of maturity; we cannot fix the evening rays of age, in the shadowy horizon; but we can cherish that goodness

which is the sweetness of childhood, the joy of youth, the strength of maturity, the honor of old age, and the bliss of saints."

The aids of philosophy to promote the comfort and dignity of advancing age have been often given, in the form of beautiful rules, or striking aphorisms. Yet these will be found frail, or rootless, unless the soul is at peace with itself and with its Maker.

It may be, that God's gift of life in its more protracted periods, is by certain classes of observers, undervalued, or vilified. Should it be our lot to reach any of those periods, may we do justice to the Giver's goodness. May we so co-operate with all heavenly influences, so conform our conduct to the precepts of the Gospel, so trust in our Redeemer, that

"What is dark

- In us, He may illumine; what is weak,
Raise and support."

Thus, striving to prove that age, though deemed so unlovely, can be happy and holy,

may we find the last note of its hymn sweetly harmonizing with the angels' welcome, "Come up hither!"

CHAPTER II.

OLD.

“My Mariners!

Souls that have toil'd and wrought and felt with me,
That ever with a simple welcome took
The thunder or the sunshine, and oppos'd
Free hearts, free foreheads, you and I are old:
Yet age hath still his honor and his joy.”

TENNYSON.

OLD! Can you remember how you felt, when that adjective was first coupled with your name? Perhaps your milliner in fitting a new hat, chanced to remark, that was a “becoming fashion for an *old lady* ;” or some coachman, by way of recommending his carriage, might have added, it was remarkably easy for an “*old gentleman* to get in and out of.”

Old, indeed! How officious and rude, these

common people are! Whereupon, you have consulted your mirror, and been still more indignant at their stupidity.

But you may have been more gently helped along to this conclusion, by the circumstance of paternity. *Old Mr. and Mrs.* set in opposition with *young Mr. and Mrs.*, lose much of their discordance, and become familiar household words. The satisfaction of hearing your eldest darling thus distinguished, has softened the bitterness of your own unflattering cognomen. Possibly, you have been moved magnanimously to exclaim, with the sententious Ossian, "Let the name of Morni be forgotten among the people, if they will only say, behold the father of Gaul."

Still, it is hard to have a quietus suddenly put upon long-cherished hopes and vanities. "The baby shall not be named after me," said a young parent of his first-born, "for it will be *old John* and *young John*, while I am yet in my prime." "I wish my son had not taken it into his head to marry so early," said

a lady in a remarkably fine state of preservation; “for now, I suppose, it must be *old* Madam, and *young* Madam.” The unmarried, whose recollections can bisect a century, are prone to be annoyed at the disposition to pry into dates, and are sure that no well-bred person would be guilty of such absurd curiosity.

Yet, to cover the tracks of time, and put family records out of the way, are of little avail. There will be here and there, a memory stubbornly tenacious of chronological matters, and whoever labors to conceal his proper date, will usually find some Argus to watch over and reveal it.

But, after all! what is there so frightful in this little Saxon word *old*? This collocation of three innocent letters, why do they thrill the hearts of so many fair women and brave men, with terror and aversion?

Is everything that is *old* deteriorated? What do you think of old wine? We can not, indeed, say quite as much about that, in

these temperance times, as Anacreon did. But I've always understood, when physicians recommended its tonic or restorative powers in medicine, it was the *old*, and not the *new*. Ask the epicure to partake of new cheese. Saith he not, "No: the *old* is better." Does any one question the correctness of his taste? What do you say of an *old friend*, that best cordial of life? Blessings on his smile, and on the hearty grasp of his hand. What if he does come, leaning on his staff? There is no winter in his heart. He was brought up in times when friendship was more than a name.

"The vine produces more grapes when it is young," says Bacon, "but better grapes for wine, when it is old, because its juices are more perfectly concocted." Very true, no doubt. A wise man, was my Lord Bacon. We see everything is not worse for being old.

Is it worth while to be so much shocked at the circumstance of becoming old? Is it a mark of excommunication from our race?

On the contrary, we have a chance of finding some very good company.

So then, we to whom thrice twenty years, each with its four full seasons, fairly counted out, pressed together, and running over, have been given, will no longer resist the epithet, *old*. “To this complexion we have come at last.” We will not be ashamed of it. It is better to be old, than to be wicked.

Let us draw nearer together. I hold that we are not a despicable body. Similarity of position, gives community of interest. Have we not something to say, that others need not hear? We’ll say it in this book.

And first, I would whisper a proposition, that we depend not too much on sympathy from the young. Those who earnestly demand that commodity, having outlived their early associates, will stand a chance of being numbered among the repiners of old, “sitting in the market-place, and calling unto their fellows, we have piped unto you, and ye have

not danced, we have mourned unto you and ye have not lamented."

Secondly, let us search after bright things, in the world, and among its people. "Every year of my life," says Cecil, "I grow more convinced that it is wisest and best to fix our attention on the beautiful and the good, and dwell as little as possible on the dark and the base."

Yet it is said that the past-meridians are prone to be querulous, dissatisfied, and to multiply complaints. I think I have heard a few of these. Supposing we should listen to and examine them.

"*The world is not what it used to be.*" No. It is in a state of palpable progress. It has thrown off its seven-mile boots, and travels by steam. We plod after it in our antique, lumbering stage-coaches, and can scarcely keep in sight the smoke of its engine. We can not overtake it, and it will not stay for us. The world is in a different phase of

action. It pleads guilty to this accusation. What next?

"We do not receive the respect that was once paid to age." Perhaps we expect too much. Is not something due *from* us? We think the young neglect us. Do we not owe something to the young ourselves? Those who linger at a banquet after others are gone, should take especial pains to make themselves agreeable. If we find less courtesy than we wish, let us show more. It becomes us to be very meek and patient, to make amends for our long entertainment at life's board. "I had a beautiful dream," said a bright boy, "I thought we children were all in heaven, and so happy. By and by, grandfather came in frowning, and said as he always does, 'Can't these children stop their noise?' So, we all ran away."

"People are tired of us." It may be so. The guest who tarries late, is sometimes counted intrusive or burdensome. Toward those who have long retained coveted honors

or emoluments, there is a natural impatience for reversion. "That old lawyer has stood first at the bar, long enough," says the younger aspirant. "That old physician gets all the practice; we young doctors may starve." "That old author has been the favorite of the public an unreasonable time; the rest of us want a fair chance." The monopoly of wealth is equally hazardous, though expectant heirs may be less frank in their expression of impatience. The resignation at the departure of the aged and distinguished, can be readily understood. Allusions to the majority of the early summoned, may be sometimes significant. "Those whom the gods love, die young," said a pagan. In an age when all slow movements are unpopular, speed in departure may possibly be counted among the graces; and in a republic, a desire for the equalization of honors, is neither peculiar nor reprehensible.

"*We are not in good health.*" Very likely. It would be remarkable if we were. We

could not expect to wear the world's harness so many years, up hill, and down hill, without some chafing. It would be a wonder if none of our senses were enfeebled. They have served us for a long time. Let us be thankful for the period in which we have seen clearly, heard quickly, and moved nimbly. Many mysterious springs, and intricate chords, and delicate humors, have been kept in order to this end. We will praise the Architect of such wonderful mechanism, that it has so well served us, and that He has seen fit so long to keep the "pitcher from being broken at the fountain, or the wheel at the cistern."

"Our early friends have departed." Ah! there is sadness in that sound. But on this tenure we commenced our earthly journey. They were to go from us, or we from them. We linger in the deserted hall, and ought not to marvel that its flowers droop, and its lamps wane, or are extinguished. Yet our blessed ones, lost for a time on earth, are

they not to be found in heaven? Only a little in advance of us, have they forded the dark river. See we not their white garments glitter from the opposing bank? Does not their smile inspire us with courage ourselves to launch away? We go not to a stranger's land. Is not that glorious clime of our hope endeared by the thought that so many of those whom we best loved here, await us there? that the hands which we here pressed so fondly, shall renew the loves, which death for a moment sundered? that those voices which have never ceased to linger in our hearts as a treasured melody, shall be the first to welcome us to the society of an "innumerable company of angels, and to the spirits of the just made perfect?"

Whoever persists in complaining of this mortal life, virtually admits that he desires another. Are we ready for an untried existence? ready at a moment's warning to launch away, and return no more? ready for its atmosphere and service of love?

If any preparation for this change of clime is incomplete, let us address ourselves fervently to the work, without loss of time or energy in murmuring. We might, indeed, in our loneliness and morbidness, multiply complaints without end. The habit would grow with indulgence, till every breath became a claim for sympathy, or an objurgation if it were withheld.

But *cui bono*? Have not others infirmities and troubles, as well as ourselves? Why add to their load? Would it not be better to take a part of theirs? "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." It hath been well said that "murmuring is a black garment, and becometh none so ill as saints."

Oh friends! let us not lose our interest in life's blessings, because we have so long enjoyed our share of them. Rather, as an eloquent writer of our own has said, will we "arise, and throw open a window in our hearts, and let in the tone of the bird, and

the breath of the violet." We will not permit that bright heart-window to be sealed, nor the hand, through our own inertness, to become paralyzed, while genial nature still spreads her charms around us, and invites us to rejoice in them, and in the God who gave them.

CHAPTER III.

Reporters.

“Gather earth’s glory and bloom *within*,
That the soul may be brighter when youth is past.”

MRS. OSGOOD.

“THE senses,” says Lord Bacon, “are reporters to the mind.” No wonder that they should get wearied with taking evidence, when the case is before the court, some three or fourscore years. It is only surprising that their declension should not be expected.

Various expedients have the ingenuity of man devised, to strengthen their weakness, or supply their loss. The spectacle-maker furnishes eyes, and the dentist, teeth. The worshipful fraternity of wig-fanciers, cover bald temples with hair, to any desired pattern or hue. The crutch-vender, and the

cork-worker, do their best to aid diseased locomotion. The tiny, curving trumpet, promises to stir the dull tympanum.

Yet, can any human power revivify the defunct ear? If sound hath died in its mysterious temple, is there a resurrection, a second life? Among the senses, that of hearing is prone to be the most frequently impaired, and when lost, to awaken the least sympathy. The hand is involuntarily stretched to lead the blind, or to give a seat to the lame. But at the approach of the deaf, there is a flight, or with those who remain, a sense of labor. No long conversations can be anticipated, save with the long-suffering. Deafness, more than other infirmities, repels intercourse, and cuts the links that bind man to society.

Has our ear grown weary? It has heard many discords in its day, without a doubt. The nerves, its ambassadors, may need repose. It is true that we are thus prevented from rendering ourselves agreeable in society.

But, perhaps, when we were there, we did not do or receive any great amount of good. Possibly, our oral contributions to knowledge may not be much missed, and meditation may be as serviceable to us as the taking in of new supplies. It may be our true wisdom to withdraw from the traffic of words, and cultivate a more thorough acquaintance with our own hearts, and our hearts' true friends, the angels. Perchance, we have lingered long enough among earth's broken tones, and are called to reserve our listening powers for the melodies of heaven.

The eye, that keeps so fresh our blessed communion with nature, has that become dim? Are those who "look out at the windows, darkened?" Must the world of books be in a great measure closed to us, or perhaps, the dear faces of friends shrouded? Then, the soul's pictures gather clearness, and memory walks in halls where is perpetual light. Thought concentrates itself, and makes its work more perfect. Should we have had the

Iliad of Homer, or the greater poems of Milton, or the histories of Prescott, if the outer eye had not been "quench'd by drop serene," and the flashing of the world's torches and flambeaux shut out from the mind's sanctuary? Hear the brave, blind old poet,

"So much the rather, thou Celestial Light,
Shine inward, and the soul thro' all her powers
Irradiate."

Good and faithful servants have the reporting senses been to us. Year after year have they spread for us the charms of nature, and brought us the music of the living world, and the odor of the rose, and the thrill of the love-kiss, and the pleasure drawn from the essences of earth's fruits, and from that inferior creation which was yielded to man's dominion, that the nutriment of their life might sustain his own. If any of these sentinels at length slumber at their post, if they falter or decay, we will not view it as an infliction, or an affliction, but rather as a tranquillizing pause of preparation for a state

where they are no longer needed. While we rejoice that they have for many years been continued to us, we will not forget to be thankful that we have ourselves also been spared for further improvement.

How many dangers have been overruled that we might be sheltered. What hosts of enemies have been trodden down that we might live. In how many nameless forms does death beset helpless infancy. From the cradle what an unending procession to the grave. The little hand falls powerless, the eye just learning to love the light, retires within its sealed fringes, the tongue that began to lisp the mother's name is mute, and she, with a sorrow that words have never told, is a weeper over a small, green mound, or starting at midnight, stretches her empty arms in vain. Yet from the foes that beset waking life, we have been saved.

The child at school, having surmounted the perils of earlier years, is considered comparatively safe. Who says there is safety at

any age, if he has heard the funeral prayer by the pale clay so late full of vigor, and seen the school-mates move a mournful train, to the cold bed of the loved sharer in their studies and their sports.

Youth is forth, like the morning-sun upon the green hill-tops. Its cheek is bloom; its step, grace; its voice, melody. No care hath touched it, and kneeling love worships it as an idol. Rose there a voice upon the saddened air, "ashes to ashes, dust to dust!" All is over. Perchance, it was our bosom's friend. Yet we lived, and passed onward.

The father and mother are the centre of a happy circle. All their powers are in requisition to protect, to guide, to foster the children whom God hath given them. They seem essential to their welfare, not only for the "life that now is, but for that which is to come." Their place is empty. Their voice is silent. To the home of their love they return no more, and the orphans go about the streets.

But have we been permitted to see our nursery-plants grow up, and cast a fair shadow? Have we taken a blossom from their stem, a baby grandchild upon our knee, and felt its velvet fingers moving lovingly amid our silver hairs, and new life entering into our veins from its quickly beating heart, or merry laughter? And was not this new affection as fond as that of young paternity, as warm with fresh hope, and perchance even more pleasant, in being freed from an anxious burden of accountability?

Why should we ever forget to be thankful? Does the soldier, standing at his own quiet door, having left most of his comrades stark and stiff on fields of warfare, feel no gratitude? Does the sailor, whose companions sank with the wrecked ship, view with indifference the life-boat that rescued him from the whelming wave?

Behold, from the battle and the storm, we have been saved. Wherefore we are thus distinguished, it is not for us to say. Yet a

weight of obligation rests on us, to render, in some proportion, according to the benefits we have received, and the risks from which we have been shielded.

Are we not in life's school, the highest class? the longest under training? and probably the first to be dismissed? How can we best prove that our tuition has not been in vain, that He who hath granted us such a protracted term of fatherly discipline, will not pronounce us idle scholars, or profitless stewards of his abounding mercy? So faithfully served by His reporters, we should surely be able to present a good report at last.

Sometimes, in seasons of earnest supplication, we may have felt as if we could adopt the appeal of the endangered debtor, "Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all."

The Master hath had patience with us. How have we performed our part of the contract?

CHAPTER IV.

The Custody of Knowledge.

“The old man sate in his elbow-chair,
His locks were thin and gray ;
Memory, that early friend, was there,
And he in querulous tones did say,
‘Hast thou not lost, with careless key,
Something that I entrusted to thee ?’
Her tardy answer was sad and low,
“I fear, I fear that it may be so.”

KNOWLEDGE, in all ages of the civilized world, has been prized and coveted. The cloistered monk made it of old, a substitute for life's warm charities, and the philosopher of modern times finds in it a more permanent distinction than rank or wealth can bestow. The pleasures of original thought, of deep research, of high converse with nature or with art, are a rich reward for the persever-

ance they require. For them, both contemplative and ambitious men have been content

“To scorn delights and live laborious days.”

To the mind thus elevated, the joys of heaven are enhanced by the thought that there its aspirations will be freed from the barriers and obstacles that fettered them here below. A fair, young creature, to whom death had dealt the final stroke, pointed upward in ecstatic hope, and said with her ebbing breath,

“There, boundless floods of knowledge roll,
And pour, and pour upon the soul.”

To *retain*, as well as to *amass* this precious treasure, is a point of immense importance. The “custodia,” or military guard of the ancient Romans, led chained to his left hand, the prisoner or captive committed to his charge. Of memory, we are wont to expect similar vigilance. The tendency of advanced age, is to impair its custody. Whether this tendency is inevitable, or to be resisted, is an inquiry of serious import.

The venerable President Quincy, whose retentive powers, and mental elasticity, surmount the pressure of time, thus pleasantly alludes to this subject, in a speech on a public occasion in Boston, when he had numbered seventy years :

“To an old man, Memory is wont to be an arrant jilt, and is no way delicate in letting him know, that like the rest of her sex, she gives young men the preference.”

The fidelity of Memory, is doubtless more entire, for trusts committed to her in early life. She had then, fewer objects to divide her attention, and more room in her casket to arrange her accumulating stores. She attaches the highest value to what was gained with toil, so that the axioms and precepts which were deepened by education, seldom escape her.

There are some who propose the use of written memoranda, as an expedient for mental retention. Yet they serve rather to nourish the sloth of Memory, than to gird her

for healthful action. Is it necessary that she should fail with years, unless the action of disease impairs some of those organs through whose agency she has been accustomed to receive impressions?

The women of our aborigines were the keepers of the archives and legendary lore of their tribes. In extreme age, their powers of recollection have been observed to be permanent and vivid. I saw one of the Mohegan nation, who had numbered one hundred and seventeen years. The skin upon her face and hands was rigid and mottled as the bark of a tree, and from her eyes light had long departed. Yet within, the lamp of memory clearly burned. She spoke of the state of her people, in the far-off days of her childhood, of the terror they felt at the powerful and savage Mohawks, of the lineaments of different chieftains who had borne sway, and of the spreading strength of the whites, who like a great oak-tree overshadowed them. She graphically narrated many circumstances

of the visit of her brother, the Rev. Samson Occum, to England, of the kindness that was shown him there by the great and good, the presents that were made him, and spoke especially of the books that he so proudly brought back to his native shores.

I had also a valued friend, who reached the age of one hundred and one, whose memory was not confined to the impressions of early years, but took sympathetic cognizance of passing events. An amiable temper kept awake his interest in all around, and prevented the hermetical sealing of what only concerned his own early and immediate sphere.

That infirmity of the retentive faculties is inseparable from advanced age, seems the general opinion. I would ask, if it is a condition of mind, exclusively confined to the old? I think I have known the blooming and the vigorous to forget many things. The young girl may forget to learn her lessons, and the graduate of college, the lessons that

he has learned. The philosopher has been known to forget his own theories, and the eloquent statesman to pay his debts. It is not the exclusive province of grey hairs to forget attainments, resolutions or promises. There was a gentleman who had the reputation of forgetting the precise hour that had been appointed for his marriage, and was found prolonging a walk, when the bridal party had assembled. Whether this was real forgetfulness, or affectation, I was not given distinctly to understand. But at any rate, he had not lost his memory through age.

Consider what untiring efforts are made, to strengthen the retentive powers of the young. Stated lessons through their whole scholastic period, daily recitation and repetition, conversation with teachers and fellow-pupils, deepening, riveting, incorporating knowledge with the very structure of the mind. Memory is thus made a prompt, active servant. She is strong through exercise. She has no time to idle away. She

is busy, tinging dreams, even when the body sleeps.

But we, who have been warned of her disposition to become a deserter, take few precautions to detain her. Perhaps we feed her on the old, mouldy corn, and neglect to give her a taste of the new harvest. Cognizance of passing things, as well as of recorded events, is essential to her healthful condition.

I had a friend, God bless every memorial and mention of him, who to the verge of eighty, labored to preserve a naturally strong memory, not only by interest in the concerns of others, but by learning daily, by heart, something from books. Can we not form the habit of acquiring verbatim, every day, a few lines of poetry, or a single verse from the Bible?

Can't we remember? I suspect the failure to be that of sufficient repetition. No one is interested to hear us. The child, whose first, faltering intonations, we fostered with parental pride, is immersed in the cares of life, and

cannot regard our fragmentary gleanings. We need not expect our children, or grandchildren, to listen to our mental gatherings, as we have done to theirs. Friends and visitors, we would not wish to annoy, and thus the privilege of repetition, on which memory so much depends, is forfeited.

An aged gentleman, who was not willing to lose the advantage of thus deepening the traces of a course of history he was pursuing, devised an ingenious expedient. A promising youth, the expenses of whose education he was kindly defraying, came daily at a regular time, to read to him. He employed a portion of this interval, in a condensed statement of what he had perused in solitude, and was surprised to find how tenaciously it afterward adhered to remembrance. Thus the pupil unconsciously became a teacher, and the benefactor shared in his own gifts.

Why would it not be well for neighbors who are advanced in years, to meet at allotted periods, and converse critically of the authors

they are reading, and repeat what they have considered worthy to be committed to memory? If it should seem too much like a school, is there any objection to that? Why might there not be schools for the aged, as well as schools of the prophets? Life is a school. "I shall be thankful to die, learning something," said a wise man.

The truth is, that Memory requires more culture, than the aged are inclined to give her. They take it for granted that she must decay, and antedate the time. They release her from service among the living present, and force her to look only backward, until the sinews of her neck are stiffened. One remedy for deepening what we do not wish to forget, is to teach it to others. An auditory of little ones will usually hang around the old person who tells them stories. Grave truths, and sacred precepts, may be thus enwrapped in "sugary narrative," with a salutary and lasting influence. One aged person who had been in the habit of briefly writing in a jour-

nal, from early life, found it profitable in his nightly self-examination, to trace back the same day through many years, recalling the dealings of divine providence with himself and others, and selecting some subject for the little descriptive entertainment his grandchildren expected from him every morning.

It has been already admitted that passing events are more difficult to be retained by the aged than those which were coeval with their prime. Is not the antidote, to mingle as much interest and affection as possible with the moving drama of life, and its actors? to entwine around each new generation, the tendrils of sympathy, not forgetting to "rejoice with them who do rejoice?" Thus shall Memory, fed by kindly sympathies, like the Roman captive, nourished at his daughter's breast, endure and flourish.

" Ah! when shall all men's good
Be each man's care? and universal love
Strike like a shaft of light, across the land?"

Should it be felt, or feared, that in spite of every precaution, Memory indeed grows in-

ert to intellectual gatherings, or to the routine of daily events, that she records not as formerly the dates of history, or the names of men, let the *heart* breathe upon her. That is Ithuriel's spear. Though her key may have been so long used, that some of its wards are worn, Love's hand can turn it.

Heart-memories are the most indelible. A woman of more than fourscore, in whom sickness had prostrated both physical and mental energies, failed to state correctly, even the number of her children. A friend endeavored to restore the imagery of active years, but in vain. At length, the circumstance of her father's leaving home to take a soldier's part in the war of our Revolution, was accidentally mentioned. It had called forth the deep anxieties of an affectionate family, when she was yet a young child. The fountain of the heart heaved, light came to her eye, and a tear glittered there, as she murmured,

“I remember,—yes,—I remember his kiss

when he turned away from the door. It is warm on my cheek, now."

If Memory is weary, it is safe to sustain her on the arm of that blessed charity which embraces all mankind. The religion whose seat is in the affections, survives when polemic fervor and theological subtleties fade in oblivion. The instance of the aged clergyman, who forgot his boyhood's friend, the favorite son under whose roof he dwelt, and the darling babe who was daily brought to nestle in his bosom, yet remembered the name of his "dear Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ," is well known, but always worthy of being repeated.

If holy love thus keeps alive the memory, like living waters at its root, when its green leaves are crisp with frost, let us labor to strengthen that love toward God, and likewise toward this fleeting world, precious because it is His world, and His hand has placed us as pilgrims in it. Yet should we feel within ourselves, that Memory has become vacillating or infirm, we will be in no haste to pro-

claim it on the house-tops. There are enough who are ready and swift to publish the declension, if we admit it ourselves. Rather should we struggle to keep hold of the hand of that old and tried friend, as long as possible. We will not expose her weakness, nor say that she has deserted us, while we can touch the hem of her garment. We will not see her go forth like Hagar, from Abraham's tent, without putting on her shoulder the water-bottle that she may refresh herself in the wilderness. Though she return no more to the oaks of Mamre, yet if we are at last so blessed as to meet the angels who visited there, she will be with them; for she is never to die.

CHAPTER V.

Beauty of Age.

“ The principle of beauty hath no age,
It looketh forth, even though the eye be dim,
The forehead frost-crown'd, yea, it looketh forth
Like holy star, on all whom God hath made.”

THE *beauty of age!* Does any one call me ironical, or point the finger at me in derision? Verily, I am speaking in good faith.

Yet am I not ignorant of what Time takes away. I know that he is prone to steal from the eye its lustre, and from the Parian brow its smoothness. The round cheek falls away at his ploughshare, and the dimples disappear. The hair no longer abundant, leaves the bald crown, or withered temples unshielded. Its hues of chesnut, or auburn, or raven black, vanish, and the complexion, no longer relieved by their rich contrast, loses its tint of rose or

lily, and settles into the trying companionship of iron grey or white. The erect form yields its dignity. The vertebral column bends, and the limbs resign their elasticity. Happy are they, who are compelled to call in no aid from crutch, or staff, to sustain their footsteps. The beautiful hand loses its plumpness, and bones and sinews and jagged veins become protuberant. Even the ear sometimes forfeits its delicate symmetry, and grows elephantine. The voice is prone to forget its harmony, or unmodified by its dental allies, "pipes and whistles in its sound."

All these deteriorations, and more than these, I admit, yet boldly sustain my argument, *the beauty of age*.

Where is it? In what does it consist? Its dwelling is in the soul, and it makes itself visible by radiations that reach the soul; by the smile of benevolence, by limitless good will, by a saintly serenity, by the light of heaven, shining upon the head that is so near it.

The smile of Washington, which had always possessed a peculiar charm, gathered force and sweetness from the snows of time. One who was accustomed to meet him in the family, says, "Whenever he gave me one of these smiles, I always felt the tears swelling under my eye-lids."

What an affecting sketch of the tranquil beauty of age on which death hath set its seal, is given in a letter from Pope, to an artist whom he desires to preserve the likeness of the mother whose declining years were soothed by his filial love and duty.

"My poor old mother is dead. I thank God that her death was as easy as her life has been innocent; and as it cost her not a groan, or even a sigh, there is still upon her countenance such an expression of tranquillity, nay, almost of pleasure, that it is amiable to behold. It would afford the finest image of a saint expired, that painter ever drew; and it would be the greatest obligation which that art could bestow on a friend,

if you could come and sketch it for me. I hope to see you soon, ere this winter-flower shall have faded. I will defer the interment until to-morrow night. I know you love me, or I could not have written this, or indeed, at such a time, have written at all. Adieu. May you die as happy."

At his villa of Twickenham, bought with the first fruits of his translation of Homer's Iliad, the poet sheltered and solaced this venerable mother. From her honored seat at his fireside, her tender, simple message cheered him amid his toils. "I send you my daily prayers, and I bless you, my deare." More touching and admirable was the interchange of these hallowed sensibilities, than all the melody of his verse.

Of the intrinsic beauty of age, I have been so happy as to see some distinguished specimens. My infant eyes opened upon one. My earliest perceptions of the beautiful and holy, were entwined with silver hairs, and I bless God, that the fourteen first years of life,

dwelt under their serene shadow. A fair countenance, a clear, blue eye, and a voice of music, return to me as I recall the image of that venerated lady, over whom more than threescore and ten years had passed, ere I saw the light. Her tall, graceful form, moving with elastic step through the parterres, whose numerous flowers she superintended, and her brow raised in calm meditation, from the sacred volume she was reading, were to me beautiful. Many sought to take counsel of her, both for the things of this life and the next, and her words were so uttered as to make them happier as well as wiser. The sorrowful came to be enlightened by the sunbeam that dwelt in her spirit, and the children of want for bread and a garment; for her wealth was the Lord's, and when she cast it into His treasury, it was with a smile, as if she was herself the receiver. The beauty of the soul was hers, that waxeth not old. Love was in her heart to all whom God had made, a love not ending in blind indul-

gence, but seeking to elevate them in the scale of existence. Thus it was until eighty-eight years had passed over her; and when she entered the exalted society for which she had been fitted here, tears flowed widely and freely, as for one in their prime. At her grave, I learned my first lesson of a bursting grief that has never been forgotten. Let none say that the aged die unloved, or unmourned by the young. It is not so.

Another, I knew, without munificent endowment of mind, person, or position. Yet had he to the last, a beauty that love followed, the beauty of kind regard to all creatures, and of a perfect temperament that never yielded to anger. Hence, the wheels of life ran on without chafing, and in his eighty-eighth year, his step was as elastic as at twenty, the florid hue of his cheek unchanged, and his bright, brown hair, without a thread of silver. He loved the plants and flowers, and knew how scientifically to promote their welfare, and to enrich the dark, brown mould, with golden

fruits, and fair vine-clusters. By these sweet recreations, life was made sweeter, and renewed its pleasures, like the fresh spring-buds, and the bird that returns again to its nest after the winter. Sorrows he had tasted, but they left no cloud, only a deeper tenderness for all who mourned. His religion had no mixture of coldness toward those who differed from him, no exclusiveness, no bigotry. The frailties of those around, he regarded with gentleness, or with pity. He blamed not, upbraided not. On his loving soul, there was no slander-spot. His life was like one long smile, closing with a music-strain. And on it was written as a fair motto, "*the man without an enemy.*"

From the sacred pictures of the departed that hang in the soul's temple, I would fain select another. It is of a friend, who in early years, suffered from feebleness of constitution, yet by care and temperance, so renovated his health, that age was to him better, and more vigorous than youth. A strong perception of

the beautiful, both in nature and art, lighted up his mind with a perpetual sunbeam. His fine taste went hand in hand with a perfect philanthropy, so that what he admired, he patronized, and what he patronized, he spread abroad, that others might share his enjoyment. The gates of his spacious rural villa, were thrown open as a pleasure-ground for all the people, and with the treasures of literature and the arts, he enriched the noble public institute that he founded. "The holy truth walked ever by his side;" while independence of thought and action, with regard to men, was mingled with the deepest humility and reverence toward God. To draw merit from obscurity, to sustain honest industry, to encourage humble virtue, to stimulate the young to higher effort, and silently to relieve the suffering poor, were his pleasures. And with these pleasures would sometimes steal over his brow an expression denied to what the world calls beauty, "the set of features, and complexion, the tincture

of the skin, that she admires." It was the beauty of the soul, looking forth in the life of one, who faithfully and without ostentation, held his large fortune in stewardship for God and for man.

By his side was a being of an angelic spirit, who strengthened all his high resolves, and tenderly divided his sorrows and his joys. Methinks I see her, as if she now sate beside me ; her delicate, upright, symmetrical form, the grace of her movements, the magic of her smile, the courteous manners, that charmed even the unrefined, the tasteful adaptation of costume to position, and the perfect judgment that led her to choose

“ Best means for wisest ends, and speak right words
At fitting times.”

She was said to have been exceedingly beautiful in youth, but the portraits of that period bore no resemblance to her countenance in advanced years, so much had Time changed its structure. Yet she held a talisman over which he had no power, a good-

ness, disrobed of self, enchanting all that came within its sphere, and a trusting piety that knew no cloud.

Thus she, and the companion of her days, made their childless home attractive to every visitant, until the verge of fourscore, when they entered a mansion not made with hands. She was first summoned, and through a lingering decline, sought strength from above, to adhere as far as possible to her habits of usefulness, and that gentle self-renunciation, which in promoting the good of others, forgot its own sufferings. As her step grew feeble, her brow became more sweetly serene, and daily she took her seat at the table, and the fireside, that she might cheer him by her presence, whose life of life was in her.

The last night that she was with us below, she spent as usual, some time in her oratory, ere retiring to her chamber for repose. What the angels said to her, in that sacred seclusion, or what she said to her God, we know

not ; but at the midnight hour they came, to bear her to Him. And she was ready.

It was not for us to hear their whisper, "*Sister spirit, come away !*" but we saw that they left on the untroubled brow, a smile as calm, as holy as their own. And we gave glory to God, through our tears, for her blessed example, who had departed this life in His faith and fear.

Countless instances might be adduced of the subdued and saintly lustre that marks the sunset of well-spent life. And it would be pleasant to me thus to enlarge, for it has been my privilege often to be near, and always to admire the "hoary head found in the way of righteousness."

I must indulge myself and my readers with one more example. It is a description from the graceful pen of N. P. Willis, of his own beautiful rural life on the banks of the Hudson.

"Our venerable neighbor, of eighty years of age, who with his white locks, and face beaming with the benignity of a

summer's evening, came back at the first softening of the season. He goes to the city—this beloved neighbor of ours—when the roads become impassable for his tremulous feet; but he gains health, (as he was saying with his usual truthful wisdom to-day,) not alone from the sidewalks and other opportunities of exercise. In the *mental* 'change of air' he finds an invigorating tonic, (one, by the way, which I am glad of this bright example to assist in recommending to the dispirited invalid, for there is more medicine in it than would be believed, without trial,) and he inhales it in the larger field that he finds for the instructive benevolence which forms his occupation in the country. He passes his time in the city in visiting schools, hospitals, prisons—every place where human love and wisdom would look in together. He speaks fluently. His voice is singularly sweet and winning; and, with his genial and beautiful expression of countenance, his fine features, and the venerable dignity of his bent form in its Quaker garb, he is listened to with exceeding interest. Children particularly, delight to hang on his words. One great charm, perhaps, is his singular retention of creativeness of mind—though so old, still continuing to talk as he newly *thinks*, not as he *remembers*. The circumstances of the moment, therefore, suffice for a theme, or for the attractive woof on which to broder instruction, and he does it with a mingled playfulness and earnestness which form a most

attractive as well as valuable lesson. Can any price be put on such an old man, as the belonging of a neighborhood? Can landscape gardening invent anything more beautiful than such a form daily seen coming through an avenue of trees, his white locks waving in the wind, and the children running out to meet him with delight? Friend S—— strolls to Idlewild, on any sunny day, and joins us at any meal, or lies down to sleep or rest on a sofa in the library—and can painting or statuary give us any semblance, more hallowing to the look and character of a home, more cheering and dignifying to its atmosphere and society? Among the Arts—among the refinements of taste—in the culture of Beauty, in America—let us give Old Age its preëminence! The best arm-chair by the fireside, the privileged room with its warmest curtains and freshest flowers, the preference and first place in all groups and scenes in which Age can mingle—such is the proper frame and setting for this priceless picture in a home. With less slavery to business, and better knowledge and care of health, we shall have more Old Age in our country—in other words, for our homes, there will be more of the most crowning beauty.”

Youth hath its beauty, tress and smile,
And cheek of glowing ray;
They charm the admiring eye awhile,
Then fade, and fleet away;

But Age, with heaven-taught wisdom crown'd,
That waits its Father's will,
And walks in love with all around,
Hath higher beauty still.

Are not the changes in man's life, like those of the day and the seasons, beautiful? Morn is fair, but we would not always have it morning. Noon is brilliant, but the wearied senses crave repose, as from the long excitement of an Arctic summer. Evening, with her placid moon through the chequering branches, disguises every blemish, bathes the simplest architecture in a flood of silver light, and makes the vine-clad cottage, and the antique column, alike beautiful.

Even though it should chance to be winter, yet shrink not to come forth, with a heart to admire and love; for through the bare trees, the silver queen of heaven looks down more clearly, and the untrodden snow-hills rejoice in her beam, and amid the pure, blue ether, the stars multiply, each giving secret sweet-voiced welcome to the soul that is soon to rise above their spheres.

CHAPTER VI.

Air.

“ And now, behold, your tender nurse, the air,
And common neighbor, that with order due
Whene’er you breathe, doth in accordance move
Now in, now out, in time and measure true ;
And when you speak, so well the art she loves
That doubling oft, she doth herself renew ;
For all the words that from your lips repair
Are but the countless tricks and turnings of the air.”

SIR JOHN DAVIES.

THE friendship of the elements for man is beautiful. To inspire his frail fabric with vitality, to warm, to refresh, and finally to cover it when it sleeps the dreamless sleep, are their kind and perpetual services. Each of these “ministering particles,” have in their turn, won eloquent praise.

Zoroaster and his followers deified the

subtle Fire, in which they recognized the great vivifying principle of the universe. Pliny, and other ancient philosophers, applauded the pervading love of the Earth for her offspring, which like a watchful mother, fed and clothed the creature of the dust, and lulled his latest sorrow in her bosom. Water, has been the favorite of the moderns, who have discovered in it new affinities with health, and almost uncontrollable agencies in the realm of nature. Our own simple remarks will be confined to the remaining element of Air, which the quaint poet at their head, made some two hundred and fifty years since, a chosen theme for his verse.

It may not, indeed, be subjugated by man to such varieties of servitude as some of its compeers, yet he can scarcely exist a moment without its permission. The earth, he burdens with palaces and pyramids, the pent fires do his bidding, and his ships rule the mountain-wave. But he inflates a balloon, and the storm-cloud overturns it, and per-

haps, takes the life of the headlong æronaut. In his reverie, he builds a castle on the air, and where is it ?

Yet this imperious and impervious element, the master of his life, how varied and earnest are its ministrations for his welfare. If he will systematically combine it with active exercise, it gives him strength and vigor. Of this, the advanced in years, seldom are sufficiently aware. They suffer lassitude to steal over them, till like the sleeper among Alpine snows, they arise no more. A daily walk or drive in the open air, preserves energy, and quickens the tide of sympathy for the living world.

The mother country gives us, in this respect, good examples, if we would but heed them. Her young infants are sent forth in the fresh morning air. Her little ones gambol in the lawns and parks. Her ladies are great pedestrians, fearless of rain or cold. Her gentlemen, however burdened with important concerns, always find time for muscular

action. Even those who have reached a patriarchal age, often persevere in equestrian exercise, that elegant form of recreation, which more than any other, keeps alive the consciousness of manly power and dignity.

I have seen in my own country, some striking instances of the protracted power and enjoyment of this invigorating exercise. Among childhood's unfading sketches of my native place, is the figure of a beautiful old man of eighty-four; Dr. Joshua Lathrop, of Norwich, Conn., who, until the brief illness that preceded dissolution, took daily equestrian excursions, withheld only by very inclement weather. Methinks, I clearly see him now, his small, well-knit, perfectly upright form, mounted upon his noble, lustrous black horse, readily urged to an easy canter, his servant a little in the rear. I see the large, fair, white wig, with its depth of curls, the smartly cocked hat, the rich buckles at knee and shoe, and the nicely plaited ruffles, over hand and bosom, that in those days

designated the gentleman of the old school. Repeated rides in that varied and romantic region, were so full of suggestive thought to his religious mind, that he was led to construct a good little book, in dialogue form, on the works of nature, and nature's God, entitled, "The Father and Son," which we younglings received with great gratitude from its kind-hearted author; juvenile works not being then so numerous as to be slightly prized. His quick, elastic step in walking, his agility in mounting and dismounting his steed, as well as his calm, happy temperance, were remarkable, and a model for younger men.

But it is not necessary thus to turn to the far-off past, for examples of perseverance and grace, in this exhilarating exercise. Only a few months since, I saw the venerable Colonel White, of Danbury, Conn., then in his eighty-third year, on horseback, at the imposing ceremonies connected with the public erection of a monument to the memory of

General David Wooster, the revolutionary patriot and martyr. Amid thousands that thronged the streets, he was observed passing and re-passing, at an early hour, to the lofty Cemetery Hill, engaged in some preliminary arrangements for the splendid masonic rites that were to mark the burial of the fallen brave. As the long procession moved on, with civic and military pageantry, his spirited animal took fright at the unfurling of a banner, when the octogenarian rider (to whom he was a stranger, having given up his own horses for the services of the day) managed and controlled him with a serene self-possession and perfect skill, which few men in the prime of their strength could have surpassed or equalled.

To those who have not habituated themselves to equestrian exercise, a daily walk in the open air, not so far extended as to involve weariness or fatigue, is salutary even in extreme old age. To connect these excursions with a definite object, either the cherishing

of friendly intercourse, the sight of an interesting prospect, edifice or institution, or the dispensing some comfort to the abode of poverty, adds decidedly to their happy physical influence.

Of Isaac T. Hopper, the benevolent Quaker, who till his eighty-first year, continued his daily researches through the streets of New York, on errands of mercy, with such proverbial activity, it was said, "he would scarcely allow the drivers to stop for him, at ascending or descending from their vehicles. Few ever passed him without asking who he was; for not only did his primitive dress, broad-brimmed hat, and antique shoe-buckles, attract attention, but the beauty and benevolence of his face, were sure to fix the eye of ordinary discernment. He was a living temperance lecture, and those who desire to preserve good looks, need not ask a more infallible recipe than that sweet temper and active, overflowing benevolence which made his countenance so pleasing to all."

Peregrine White, the first-born Saxon in New England, the lone baby of Cape Cod, who opened his eyes ere the tossing May-flower touched Plymouth Rock, trod with firm step, until his death at eighty-four, the sands of Marshfield, taking with unshrinking breast, deep draughts of the bleak sea-air. His eldest daughter, Sarah, the wife of Mr. Thomas Young, of Scituate, Mass., inherited his hardihood, and love of the open air, and retained an unusual degree of health and mental activity, till the advanced age of ninety-two. Peregrine White, over whose honored remains, a monument is soon to be raised, served the colony with fidelity, both in civil and military offices. "He continued," say the ancient records, "vigorous and of a comely aspect to the last," battling the sharp breezes of a rock-bound shore, while monarch after monarch, reared in the luxury of palaces, fell from the throne of the parent realm.

King James, the pedant, found a tomb,

King Charles at Whitehall bled ;

Stout Cromwell held a twelve years' rule,
And slumber'd with the dead;
The second Charles, with gibe and jest,
His royal realm survey'd;
The second James in panic haste,
Fled from the wreck he made;
William and Mary, hand in hand,
Their sceptre's sway sustain'd;
Queen Anne, the last of Stuart's line,
In pomp and splendor reign'd:
Seven sovereigns, from old Albion's throne,
Stern Death, the spoiler, swept,
While still his course erect and firm,
New England's patriarch kept.

Frequent open communion with the atmospheric air, if not an absolute necessity of our being, seems an essential condition of vigorous health. The pursuits that promote that intercourse, such as horticultural, or floricultural, it is therefore desirable to cultivate.

Once on inquiring for an aged man at his door, a bright-eyed boy said,

“My grandfather has gone out on his morning-walk. I love to have him go, be-

cause he always comes back pleasant and happy."

The child had gotten the true philosophy of the case. We met the silver-haired friend returning with a freshened cheek, and a smile as if he rejoiced in the sweet air, and in Him who gave it. A kind word had he ever for all, and so he said cheerfully,

"I have just set up a banner, to wave in the breeze, when I am dead."

It seems he had been transplanting a shade-tree, of a species often destined to attain considerable size.

"The soil was not congenial," he added, "so I had it removed for an area of three or four feet, and stepped into the pit myself, to place the roots and delicate fibres at ease in their new bed. I sprinkled at first, the pulverized earth and rich compost over them, while my man added water gradually, treading down the surface firmly, as much as to say to the new comer, 'keep at home,' and finishing with a cavity around the trunk, as

a casket to hold such pearl-drops as the clouds may see fit to give."

Perceiving that his practical remarks were listened to with interest, he kindly proceeded,

"I caused the body and principal boughs to be bathed in soap-suds, and rubbed with a coarse cloth, to refresh it hydropathically after the trial of leaving its old home, and before the high winds of winter come, shall have stones laid around to keep the roots from being shaken and troubled. My wife takes an interest in these things. I love to have her hold the tree in its place, when I transplant it. I fancy it is more likely to grow, and get a blessing, if her hand has been on it. We planted a tree at the birth of all our children. Perhaps, we shall set out a grove, before we die."

The animated countenance of the aged speaker, reminded me of the enthusiasm with which Sir Walter Scott used to expatiate on the "exquisite pleasures of planting." The

greater part of the noble trees at Barley-Wood, were placed there by the hand of the venerable Mrs. Hannah More, and a cabinet-table, which she prized, and often pointed out to the attention of visitants, was inlaid with small diamond-shaped pieces of wood, from different trees of her own rearing. Those who in early life rejoiced in the culture of flowers, their own emblem of hope and beauty, might with propriety in later years, transfer this care to the nurture of fruit and shade trees, those types of bounty and beneficence; acceptable parting gifts to mankind, as well as to the birds of the air, who make their nests "and sing among the branches."

To those whose infirmities preclude the pleasure of active exercise out of doors, there still remain restricted forms of fellowship with the renovating air, which it is important to secure. The invalid lady who perseveres as far as possible in her daily ride, notwithstanding lassitude or debility tempts to the indulgence

of repose, does not lose her reward. The blessed element, thus solicited, sustains the worn frame, and sweeps away many of the morbid fancies and groundless fears that disease engenders.

A lady, who was not able to bear the fatigue of systematic riding, told me she had maintained some degree of vigor, and perhaps, resisted pulmonary tendencies, by a brief yet systematic intercourse with the morning air, for a short time through her window. Opening it, and wrapping herself in a shawl, if the current proved too fresh, she inhaled deep draughts, holding her breath until the minute vessels of the lungs were saturated with air, and then casting it off, by throwing out the arms to expand the chest.

Mrs. Emma Willard, of Troy, in that remarkable treatise of hers, "On the motive powers that produce the circulation of the blood," thus describes a course by which she has been enabled long to persist in the preparation of those learned and elaborate

works which have given her so high a rank among American writers. After speaking of her care to preserve an equal and moderate degree of warmth, during the cold seasons, she says,

“In the morning, I usually exercised about an hour, in accordance with some housekeeping habits. During the day, I took exercise once in two hours. Letting down the upper sash, and facing the current of fresh air, I began moderately, increasing my exercise until it became for a few moments violent, stepping backward and forward to keep my face to the window, and moving my arms in a manner to expand the chest. Then, as the quick, deep breathing came on, and the inspirations of air were as refreshing as water from a cool spring in summer, I checked my exercise to give full play to the respiratory organs, and when I had breathed the pure air till I was satisfied, closed the window, sat down and wrapped my cloak around me, to make for a few minutes longer, breathing my chief employ. The additional garment kept the heightened temperature which exercise had given, from passing off by evaporation, and I sat down to my writing, with fresh blood in my brain and hand, and with a warmth far more genial than that of a furnace heat. After dinner, I ‘slept awhile,’ and then employed myself in reading; and after tea, completed the old rhyme by ‘walking a

mile.' In the evening, I thus found myself as vigorous for writing as in the morning, and often wrote several hours before retiring."

As the result of this system, she states, that at the end of three years and a half, during which, especially in the winter, she labored from twelve to fourteen hours a day, in study and writing, she had better health than at the commencement of these severe toils. This philosophical and Christian care of her physical welfare, has doubtless been repaid in the uncommon preservation of those energies, which from early youth were developed in the noble profession of a teacher and pioneer in the field of education. More than five thousand of her own sex, have been under her instruction, and in every State of our Union, they lovingly remember her. It is a source of satisfaction to her friends, that now, in her sixty-eighth year, she should be making her second tour in Europe, with a bright spirit, and much of the lingering comeliness of her early prime, cheered also by that

appreciation in foreign lands, which she has so well merited in her own.

Air, whose free, loving embrace, greeteth every one who cometh into the world, should be gratefully welcomed until they go out of it. Painful contrast has taught its value to the pining sufferer in the fever-wards of some crowded hospital, and to the pale prisoner in his grated cell. The captives in the hideous "donjon-keeps" of the feudal times, or the wretched victims in the Black Hole at Calcutta, terribly tested the worth of that gift to which we are too often culpably indifferent.

I hope to be excused for any minute or common-place detail, which may have occurred in this chapter, and for having written *con amore* of what has seemed to me an important adjunct, if not an essential element of that priceless possession, "*mens sane, in corpore sana.*"

But this subtle element of air, so powerful over our physical and mental organization,

hath it aught to do with moral structure, or spiritual welfare? Modified by eloquence, it rules the multitude of minds; swelling into music, it stirs up passionate admiration; wrought into words of compassion, it heals the broken in heart; breathing from the soul of piety, it quickens the soul of others, as by the spirit of the Lord.

Whom see we on yonder couch? One, whose work on earth is finished. Air is about to forsake him. The lungs collapse. He is lifeless.

Hath he then taken final leave of the air? No. In the form of words here uttered, of deeds that sprang from those words, it shall confront him at the judgment. Of words which he hath spoken, air shaped into sound;—of deeds which he hath done, air shaped into action;—must he give account.

Let us therefore, dear friends, as long as we are dwellers in the body, beware how we use this wondrous element of *air*, lest that on

which we have never laid our hand, should fearfully confound us, when the "books are opened, and the dead, small and great, stand before God."

CHAPTER VII.

Domestic Anniversaries.

“ This is the place. Stand still, my steed,
Let me review the scene,
And summon from the shadowy Past,
The things that once have been :
For Past and Present here unite,
Beneath Time’s flowing tide,
Like footprints hidden by a brook,
But seen on either side.”

LONGFELLOW.

GERMANY, where the domestic anniversaries are the most pleasantly cherished, is distinguished by a healthful growth of domestic happiness. The return of the marriage-day, of the births of children, grandchildren, and especially of the silver-haired grandparents, are seasons of fond and fervent congratulation.

In that country, the Golden Bridal, as it is called, or the fiftieth anniversary of the marriage-day, is marked by ceremonies peculiarly striking and national. Preparations for a domestic festival are made, and the rooms richly adorned with flowers. The venerable pair, arrayed in their best garments, and surrounded by their children and near relatives, receive visitors and congratulations as if about to begin life anew. This sentiment pervades in some measure the whole entertainment. Wedding gifts are brought, and mingled with them are notes of love and good wishes, bursting forth, as the German heart is wont to do, into strains of poetry.

A recent traveler, Mr. R. S. Willis, has thus graphically described a scene of this nature, which he was permitted to witness.

“The venerably youthful pair sate side by side, in two great arm-chairs, the very picture of mellow and serene old age. Those capacious chairs were also among the gifts, having been exquisitely embroidered by fair hands. Suspended above them, hung their portraits, taken indeed,

at a much earlier period, but which seemed not half so beautiful in their youthful lineaments, as the venerable heads which now, in the calm Indian summer of life, rose beneath them. From two large vases below, on either side of the portraits, sprang two vigorous shoots of living ivy, ascending and enwreathing them, and forming a kind of triumphal arch over the couple beneath, whose accomplishment of fifty years of such unclouded, exemplary married life, might well be regarded as a triumph, and as such be celebrated."

Then follows an enumeration of the presents, many of which were costly, for the aged bridegroom having been a composer and teacher of music, had instructed some pupils of wealth and rank, who vied with each other on this occasion, in testifying their affectionate regard. A wreath of laurel was thrown over the snowy locks of the patriarch, and one of myrtle placed on the head of his companion, by a fair young girl of the Rhine, an affianced bride, who in her kiss besought the blessing of one who had so long beautified that "holy estate" upon which she, as a novice, was about to enter.

After the dinner, where two long tables were filled by the descendants and guests, a deputation of the musical pupils assembled in an adjoining apartment, to cheer, by the melody of voice and instrument, the heart of their old master, and his friends.

“No sooner,” continues the narrator, “had he recognized the performers, and the tones of his own, early devotional music, than lifting the little velvet cap which always covered his head, his silver locks floating out, and raising his glistening eyes to God, to whom these solemn strains were addressed, he seemed for a moment overcome with gratitude to Him.”

In our own land, these sacred household eras are sometimes regarded, though with less of romantic accompaniment. An instance of the quiet observance of the sixtieth anniversary, I have heard described, a rare occurrence in this world of mortality. The age of both the parties exceeded fourscore, yet their forms were unbowed; there was even a lingering of early comeliness, and that smile of the spirit which gathers depth and meaning

from long knowledge of this life, and firm hope of a better. They had entered in the bloom of youth, the conjugal relation, and “commended it in the sight of all men,” by an example of stedfast affection, and amiable virtues. The children of three generations surrounded them with affectionate reverence, and in the arms of one bright-eyed young mother, was the germ of a fourth,—a rose-bud within a rose. Among the antique things which were preserved and exhibited, were the small salver with which they commenced house-keeping, and the very same little cups of transparent china, in which the young wife, threescore years before, had poured tea at her first hospitalities. Warm words of greeting cheered this festival, and a fair table of refreshments, while another was spread with love-tokens, and gifts of friendship. Among them was a simple offering, yet of singular significance; a small parallelogram of the purest white marble, wrought into a double watch-case, and sur-

mounted in the centre, by a cross of the same material. In the cavities, lined with crimson velvet, reposed the two watches of the aged pair, the golden links of their chains intertwined and enwreathing the cross. There were the monitors and measurers of time, long used, but soon to be needed no more, and the symbols of their own undying love, clasping the prop that could never fail or forsake it.

Heartfelt cheerfulness marked this occasion, yet nothing that could war with the prayer and hymn which begun and closed it, for so many of the descendants shared in the piety of their honored ancestors, that such worship was in unison with their aspirations and joys. Sixty years to have walked hand in hand, helpful and loving, on their appointed way over mountain and flood, and through gardens wherein were sepulchres, lending the shoulder to each other's burdens, and keeping God's sunbeam bright in the soul; to have impressed the precepts of a Redeemer on the

young creatures who came into life under the shadow of their tree of love, and to become themselves more and more conformed to "the example of His great humility," is a victory not only to be admired on earth, but approved in Heaven.

A pleasant custom is it to remember the birth-days of our coevals, and of those older than ourselves. A few words of congratulation, a few cheering wishes for the future, convincing them that they are neither forgotten nor disregarded, will be of more real value than costly gifts. Affectionate references to the path in which they have walked, and the home toward which they draw near, aid in giving strength for their remaining pilgrimage.

It is true, that to prolonged years, funeral anniversaries multiply. Many of our way-marks are tombstones. We may render there, the offering of a strewn flower, and a faithful tear. Yet the tribute should be in silence, between God and our own soul, for

we need not sadden the living with the ghosts of our buried joys.

Still, these "oaks of weeping," may yield a salutary influence. The poet has well said, that he best "mourns the dead who lives as they desire." The return, both of their nativity and departure may be made serviceable to the living, if we then give new vigor to their example, continue their good works, or complete their unfinished characters. I had a friend who consecrated the birth-day of the loved ones who had gone before, by some labor in their favorite field of benevolence, or in that sphere of charitable effort, which he knew they would have approved had it been presented to them. The heart of some sad orphan, or of some lonely widow, was made glad, some cell of sickness entered, as by an angel of mercy, the page of knowledge spread for ignorance, and salvation on mission-wings sent to those who sate in the shadow of death.

Was not the melody of such gratitude

heard in heaven? Was it not a memorial meet for glorified spirits? Touched it not their pure brows with a new smile, that their entrance into high Heaven's bliss, should have annual record of praise and thanksgiving on earth?

“Again returns the day,” says the mournful mother to her heart, “in which my darling child, the light of my eyes, went down into silence. The very hour draws nigh, when for the last time his eyes beheld and blessed me, and his hand would fain have once more clasped mine. Ah! how faint was its trembling pressure; its chill entered into my soul.

“Many charities did he love; for his sake will I cherish them. He felt for the toil-worn sailors, ‘mounting up to the heavens, going down again to the depths, their souls melted because of trouble.’ I will send a donation to the good men who have combined to shelter them, and teach them the way to Heaven.

“He pitied those from whose dim eyes the

beautiful things of creation were shut out. The poor blind shall be made glad through him, this day.

“How his eye kindled with varying emotion, as he read in his young boyhood of the mutiny in the ship *Bounty*,—of the open boat in which Bligh and his fellow-sufferers doled out the bullet’s weight of bread, and the few water-drops so long,—and of the *Crusoe* settlement on Pitcairn’s island, from whence as good may spring out of evil, now rises the Sabbath worship of a little Christian community. A token of his remembrance shall go forth to that lone oasis of the Pacific.

“How he loved little children. When he was himself a child, he wished to give every destitute one, food and a garment, and a book. The orphan institution shall be reminded through my gifts, of his birth-day. And if my heart should single out any one from that number, to provide for, to watch over, and to guide on life’s future way with maternal counsels, I know it would be pleasing to the

departed, for in such things he ever took delight.

“He revered the old and gray-headed, however poor and despised. I will seek them out this day, in their desolate abodes, and put into their withered hands, his alms, and speak such kind words, as shall bring joy like a sunbeam, over their furrowed brows. And when they would fain express their gratitude, I will say, ‘Thank not *me*! I have done it for his sake!—*for his sake.*’”

So, the mother was comforted for her son, and found that solace from his birth-day in heaven, which it had never given her while he dwelt in tents of clay.

But for us, who having passed far on our journey, and lost many friends, are tempted to linger long among the graves, it is peculiarly desirable, that cheering anniversaries should have free scope, and predominate. We had rather shed a sunbeam than a midnight chill. Let us render the birth of every new year, and each return of the season of

our dear Redeemer's nativity, a time of joy to every heart within the sphere of our influence, not overlooking the lowliest servant, or the humblest child. It is better to be harmless finger-posts, pointing to paths of innocent happiness, than flaming swords to fright away the traveler from Eden.

Pleasant mirth, and amusing recollections of earlier days, are medicinal to the old, and not uninteresting to younger auditors. Perhaps the following original Valentine, which has never before been published, may serve to illustrate the sprightliness of mind that sometimes lingers amid declining years.

"'Tis more than threescore years and ten,

Our life's allotted span,

Since first in youthful, happy days,

Our friendship true began.

'Tis more than threescore years and ten,

Since as a joyous child,

I played with you on Stratford Green,

In many a frolic wild.

As I look back upon those years,

Threescore and ten and five,

Of all the mates we numbered then,

But we two are alive.

We two, of all that happy band,
Of sportive girls and boys,
Who wept together childish griefs,
Or smiled o'er childish joys.

And we're far down the vale of years,
And time is fleeting fast,
Yet I would be a child once more,
And live again the past.
Years seventy-five ! how thrills my heart,
As memory bears me back,
To tread again with buoyant steps,
My girlhood's sunny track.

But in life's retrospect I see,
Full many a saddened scene,
For life has not been all a play,
On dear old Stratford Green.
We've drank, dear friend, its mingled cup,
Of sorrow and of joy,
Since I was but a sportive girl,
You a free-hearted boy.

We both were blest with many friends,
How few are left alive !
The dearly loved have passed away,
And yet we still survive.
We still survive, and it may be
A year, perhaps a day,
When like the loved ones gone before,
We too, shall pass away.

God grant, that in life's parting hour,
Our toils and labors done,
We may go gently to our rest,
As sinks yon setting sun.

When we were young, were stirring times,
The age of iron men,
Who rung the trumpet's warlike shout,
From every hill and glen ;

Who stood for country and for home,
For liberty and life ;
' *God and the right,*' their battle-cry,
They conquered in the strife.
'Tis true, we were but children then,
But we remember well,
How many a heart was desolate,
How many a patriot fell.

For oft, the parent on his knee,
Would seat his lisping child,
And tell strange tales of battle scenes,
And legends stern and wild ;
And oft our childish cheeks were blanch'd,
And childish tears would flow,
As wonderingly we listened then,
To deeds of blood and wo.

But joy best suits the youthful heart,
Its pulse is light and free,
And so, as it has ever been,
It was, with you and me.

And still your boyhood's sports went on
My girlhood's laughter rung,
For in those days of sternest deeds,
Both you and I were young.

Do you remember, dear old friend,
The simple village school,
Where Mr. Ayres taught little folks,
To read and write by rule?
Children were timid, teachers stern,
In those our youthful days,
When, copy-book in hand, we went,
Trembling, to seek his praise.

And when you won the wished-for boon,
And I stood sadly by,
You often caused a ray of hope,
To light my downcast eye.
No matter what the teacher said,
Fresh from your generous breast,
Came to my ear the flattering words,
That mine was always best.

Do you remember that I sent
You then, a Valentine?
Fine sentiment perhaps it lacked,
But love breathed in each line.
It seems but yesterday, these five
And seventy years ago,
You then had owned no other belle,
And I no other beau.

I in return, a ribbon got,
Bright with true love's own hue,
And much it pleased my girlish taste,
For 'twas the bonniest blue.
But childhood quickly passed away,
And hearts were lost and won,
And you soon owned another love,
And I, another John.

With him, I journeyed many a year,
Happy and blest were we,
He lived to see his bairnies' bairns,
Prattling upon his knee.
We climbed 'thegither up the hill,'
But down alone I go,
And soon, 'thegither at its foot,'
With him I'll lay me low.

Yet not alone, for loving hearts,
Are left in children dear,
Who in my downward path of life,
Smooth each declining year.
And oft, to glad my aged eye,
My children's children come,
And merry laughter rings again,
In my old happy home.

For you, sole mate of earliest days,
I've cast a backward eye,
Along the changing track of time,
As swift it hurried by.

And forward may we dare to look ?
Another opening year
Hath dawned upon us, and its close,
May scarcely find us here.

One may be taken, one be left,
It may be I, or you,
Still, while we live, dear early friend,
Shall live our friendship true.
My years now number eighty-eight,
And yours are eighty-nine,
Yet once more, as in days of yore,
Accept my Valentine."

CHAPTER VIII.

Patriotic Recollections.

“The brave, great spirits who went down like suns,
And left upon the mountain-tops of death,
A light that made them lovely.”

A. SMITH.

WHAT chronology is to history, are dates to the memories of actual life. They give adhesiveness and force, to impressions that might else be desultory, and perishable.

What mathematics are to the *mind*, they may also be to the *heart*, adding stability and power to its better sentiments and affections. Sweet and salutary is it, to review the varied events of God's providence, with regard to ourselves or others, on the return of their respective anniversaries. By thus deepening the imagery, and refreshing the

colors on our moving diorama, we may renew a grateful sense of His goodness, perhaps make more permanent the benefits of His discipline.

National anniversaries give fervor to the patriotism of a people. I have seen the whole heart of England stirred up on the fifth of November, from the white-robed priest, and the chanting choir in the cathedrals, to the merry urchins let loose from school, who scarcely knew whether to denounce or laud the "Gunpowder plot," that had given them a holiday. Yet a truer fellowship and stronger nationality sprang from this general sympathy of gratulation.

The birth of our own country, so peculiar in itself, and so fraught with blessings to her children, should be warmly and reverently regarded. That event might be so embalmed and brought forward year by year, as to perpetuate the blessings which first flowed from it.

The fourth of July, 1776, is a date that

every American remembers, from the snows of Wisconsin, to the Floridian orange-groves, from the sounding shores of the Atlantic, to the new found clime of gold. A wanderer perchance, on Chimborazo, or in the Eternal City, or among the tropic isles, or daring, with frost-bound sails, the ices of the Arctic zone, he bares his head at his country's birth-day, and his heart quickens with their proud joy, who of old exclaimed, "*I am a Roman citizen.*" So may it ever be, while God shall hold in his protecting hand, our hallowed Union.

An aged friend, whose birth was on the consecrated fourth of July, 1776, never failed till the close of life to rejoice in that circumstance, as a heritage of glory. That this anniversary should have been marked by the transition to another world, of two of the venerable signers of our Declaration of Independence, each having been dignified by the highest office in our country's power to bestow, adds almost a mysterious sacredness to its historic interest.

John Adams, whose far-reaching mind saw the incipient rights of his native land, when in the chrysalis of her colonial state, she understood them not,—who with boldness and enthusiasm, unfolded and demanded them,—to whom, next to Washington, she first accorded the honor of her chief magistracy, lay at the age of ninety, on his dying couch, at his fair, paternal estate in Quincy, (Mass.,) where he first drew breath, surrounded by objects of his fondest love.

It was a holy sight
To look upon that venerable man,
Remembering all his honors, all his toils,
And knowing that his earth-receding grasp,
Was on the anchor of eternal life.

It was on the fourth of July, 1826. Raising his head from the pillow, the last brightness gathering in his eye, he said, "*It is the glorious Fourth.* God bless it. God bless you all. This is a great and glorious day."

And so, he resigned his spirit.

On the same day, Thomas Jefferson, his friend and compeer in toils and counsels for

a nation's liberty, the third President of these United States, at his Virginian home of Monticello, which he had beautified by taste and hospitality, received, while still lightly bearing the burden of eighty-three years, that guest who cometh but once to the children of men. It was his fearless pen, rich in varied literature, that drafted our Declaration of Independence :

Forth from his pen of might,
Burst that immortal scroll,
Which gave a living soul,
To shapeless clay ;
It said " Let there be light,"
And the old startled realms beheld a new-born day.

John Adams, among his latest words, had said, "*Jefferson survives.*" Yet almost at the same hour of the day that completed the fiftieth year of that nation's life, the beating of whose infant pulse they had counted and registered, both those great men expired. As Solon shrouded his head and departed, that the mystery of his absence might add

efficacy to the laws he had established for Athens, they gave to their country's first jubilee, that last solemn seal which death sets on love and patriotism.

The twenty-second of February, the birthday of Washington, should be regarded with demonstrations of national enthusiasm and gratitude. Especially should they who stand most in proximity to those tempestuous times which his wisdom helped to change into the broad sunlight of freedom, speak of the virtues of that king of men, to those who are in the forming period of life. Not as a warrior, would we chiefly commend him; that was a prominent exigence to which he was called by Heaven, and in which he conducted nobly, but we press on the imitation of those who are to come after us, his disinterested patriotism, his patience in adversity, his unswerving truth, his wisdom in the greatest matters, his just attention to the smallest, the punctuality of his dealings with all men, the godlike dignity, the serene, unostentatious piety, which

made a more perfect balance of character than has appertained to any hero in any age.

Another approach to a remarkable coincidence of dates, is the death of the venerable John Quincy Adams, just on the completion of half a century from that of the "Pater Patriæ," and also within a single day of the anniversary of his birth. He was himself the sixth President of the United States, and the only son of the second who had sustained that honor. Though he had reached the age of eighty-four, he still kept his seat among the representatives of our nation, at Washington, watching with keen eye and unimpaired intellect, whatever concerned her vitality or renown. It was on the morning of February 21st, 1848, that he appeared in the lofty halls of Congress, with his usual vigor, and gave in a clear, emphatic voice, his vote on the opening question.

Suddenly there was a cry, "*Mr. Adams is dying!*" Throngs rushed to the side of that "old man eloquent," and bore him fainting

to a sofa in an inner apartment. Partially recovering from insensibility, he said slowly, "*This is the end of earth.*"

Then, he added an assurance of his calmness and preparation, and relapsed into silent repose, until the evening of the twenty-third, when the country whom he had so long served, mourned at the tidings that he was no more.

Thus fell nobly at his post, and in the manner that his patriot heart might have chosen, this man of stainless integrity, of universal acquirements, of diplomatic training from early boyhood, and one of the few in whom precocity of talent continues to advance through the whole of life, and to ripen amid the snows of age.

But not in the splendor of the fame of statesmen or chieftains, would we lose the memory of others, who, in humbler stations, gathered firmly around the endangered cradle of our common country. Some of these were our own sires. By the hearth-stone, they have told our listening infancy, of toils

and privations, bravely and cheerfully borne. It becomes us to impress them on our children, who amid the luxurious indulgences of a great and prosperous land, can scarcely imagine the hardships and dangers by which its freedom was wrought out.

Standing as we do, literally as well as politically, on the "isthmus of a middle state," it seems incumbent on us to deliver unimpaired to a future age, such records as the Past may have entrusted to our care. The liberty which was enkindled upon our own altars, amid blast and tempest, should be guarded as a vestal flame. The voice of the actors in those "times that tried men's souls," speaks through us. Let us strive that it may enkindle pure love in some young heart, to that native land, which, though it has indeed gained a proud seat among the nations, has still the same need of protection from their virtues, that it once had from their fathers' swords.

The patriotism which we would fain cher-

ish, by keeping in life and freshness the events of our earlier history, struck deep and true root in the hearts of the softer sex, amid the storms of revolution. The privations which they contentedly and bravely endured, should not be forgotten. In many a lowly home, from whence the father was long sun-dered by a soldier's destiny, Woman stifled the sigh of her own hardships, that she might by her firmness, breathe new strength into her husband's heart, and be

“An undergoing spirit, to bear up
Against whate'er ensued.”

How often, during the long war, did the mother labor to perform to her little ones, both the father's duties, and her own, having no refuge in her desolate estate, and unresting anxiety, save the Hearer of Prayer.

I have often reflected on a simple narration, which a good and hoary-headed man, who had passed the bounds of fourscore, once gave me.

“My father was in the army, during the whole eight years of the Revolutionary War, at first as a common soldier, afterward as an officer. My mother had the sole charge of us, four little ones. Our house was a poor one, and far from neighbors. I have a keen remembrance of the terrible cold of some of those winters. The snow lay so deep and long, that it was difficult to cut or draw fuel from the woods, or to get our corn to mill, when we had any. My mother was the possessor of a coffee-mill. In that, she ground wheat, and made coarse bread, which we ate and were thankful. It was not always, that we could be allowed as much even of this, as our keen appetites craved. Many is the time that we have gone to bed with only a drink of water for our supper, in which a little molasses had been mingled. We patiently received it, for we knew our mother did as well for us as she could, and hoped to have something better in the morning. She was never heard to repine, and young as we were, we tried to make her lovely spirit and heavenly trust, our example. When my father was permitted to come home, his stay was short, and he had not much to leave us, for the pay of those who achieved our liberties, was slight, and irregularly rendered. Yet when he went, my mother ever bade him farewell with a cheerful face, and not to be anxious about his children, for she would watch over them night and day, and God would take care of the families of those who went forth to defend the righteous cause of their

country. Sometimes we wondered that she did not mention the cold weather, or our short meals, or her hard work, that we little ones might be clothed and fed and taught. But she would not weaken his hands, or sadden his heart, for she said a soldier's lot was harder than all. We saw that she never complained, but always kept in her heart, a sweet hope, like a well of living water. Every night ere we slept, and every morning when we arose, we lifted our little hands for God's blessing on our absent father, and our endangered country."

The principal events in the history of our native land, arranged according to their dates, would be profitable to us, both as a review, and an exercise of memory. Thus might we with more variety and freshness, impart to the young, that which they could not so well gather from books, details of the self-sacrifice, the courage and the piety which God recompensed with the life and liberty of a nation. Thus, might we perchance, lift a banner, slight, yet not powerless, against venality and luxury and ambition, those banes of a republic, which pollute the pure sources of patriot health.

The diligent formation, and regular refer-

ence to a daily list of dates founded on universal history, is a salutary habit. Every day in the year, has, doubtless, more than one feature of distinction, "if men would carefully distil it out." Though not an historic fact of importance, it would probably bear the record of the birth or death of some individual whose biography it would be pleasant to review, or impress on others. For if an ancient writer has truly said, that "the moral beauty on which we fix our eyes, presses its own form upon our hearts, making them fair and lovely with the qualities that they behold," the lives of the great and good must be profitable to hold before the contemplation of plastic youth.

Hints derived from our daily list of anniversaries, with some tact in avoiding prolixity, might be rendered valuable to the young who surround us. Let us hazard any aspersion of pedantry that might chance to flow from it. Ridicule of that sort, should be pointless to us. If through adduced illustra-

tion or example, we may be made the medium of implanting some great truth or holy precept, which shall bear fruit for our country after we are dead, let us neither shrink or loiter; for the time is short.

CHAPTER IX.

Accomplishments.

If a diamond was ours, at the opening of day,
Because it is eve, shall we cast it away?

ACCOMPLISHMENTS *for old people?* Yes.
And why not? It would seem as if the world thought they had no right to them. Whereas, having been obliged to part with many personal attractions, there is the more need that they should take pains to make themselves agreeable.

Every other period of life has its peculiar prospect of improvement, and its prescribed modes of promoting it. What care is expended to teach childhood the theory of language. Through ignorance, grammatical error, and solecism, it steadily advances,

nothing daunted, or discouraged. What efforts are put forth to induce the young to make the most of any attainment they may possess, and strenuously to acquire those in which they are deficient. And this is right. Maturity has its beautiful occupations, its hallowed responsibilities, and an array of resistless motives to excel in each.

Nothing seems expected of the aged but to put themselves decently away into some dark corner, and complete the climax of the great poet, "second childishness, and mere oblivion." Let's see about that. Why not adopt the suggestion of another poet, to "live while we live?"

In looking about us for some relief, or loophole through which to escape, forgive me, if I hint what at first view might seem trifling, the preservation of a cheerful countenance, and a neat, becoming costume. Inattention to these points is prone to mark those who feel themselves of little consequence in society, and the effect is to render them still

more disregarded. "A merry countenance," said Jeremy Taylor, "is one of those good things which no enemy or persecutor can take away from me."

On the subject of apparel, whose importance, ladies may, at least, be ready to admit, Madam Hancock, the dignified consort of the President of our First Congress, used to say, "I can never forgive any person in good society for not being well dressed, or for thinking of themselves after they are dressed." To a very advanced age, she was herself, a fine illustration of her theory.

The stimulant of example, also, as well as of precept, is strenuously brought to bear upon the young, in their different departments of study and accomplishment. For instance, in the science of music, requiring the daily, laborious practice of years, emulation is continually exerted. More than one fair aspirant has cheered her long session at the piano, by recalling what was said of the captivating Ann Boleyn, that "when she composed her

hands to play, and her voice to sing, it was joined with such sweetness of countenance that *three* harmonies concurred."

What a striking picture! Though waning years may preclude from this combination of three harmonies, yet be it known to all whom it may concern, that there have been old people who retained, and even made progress in what the world styles accomplishments. I have had the honor of being acquainted with ladies, who after the age of eighty, excelled in the various uses of the needle, executing embroidery by the evening lamp, and sitting so erect, that younger persons, more addicted to languid positions, asserted that "it made their shoulders ache to look at them." I am in possession of various articles, both useful and ornamental, wrought by the hands of such venerable friends, and doubly precious for their sakes.

The widow of our great statesman, Alexander Hamilton, to many other feminine accomplishments, continued to a great age, the

exquisite uses of the needle, and still, (I believe,) at ninety-eight, is remarked for the ease and courtesy with which she receives and entertains her guests.

Mrs. Madison was distinguished, not only while in the presidential mansion, where she won the heart of every visitant, but throughout a long life, by one of the most kindly and queenly natures that ever belonged to woman. So fully developed and unchangeably sustained were her social powers, and brilliance of conversation, that after the age of eighty, I have often seen her in the elegant assemblages at the court of our nation, address to every person some appropriate remark, or touch some train of familiar thought, that would make the embarrassed at ease, or the happy, happier. She was unwilling, even for hours, to indulge in the repose of a seat, lest some one should escape her notice, whom she might cheer, or gratify. Especially, when children were present, she never forgot, or overlooked the youngest, but with admirable

tact had something to say, which they might take with them as a pleasant memory for future years.

In the high and rare attainment of elegant reading, I have never known any lady so conspicuous to advanced age, as the mother of the late Bishop Wainwright. Her distinct articulation, and perfect emphasis, made listening a pleasure, and drew out the full beauty of the thought which they rendered vocal. To her also belongs the high praise of having formed, in early boyhood, the habits and style of elocution, of her distinguished and lamented son.

Many precious pictures have I, in that niche of memory's gallery, where the hoar-frost sparkles. One of these, I must indulge myself in transferring. It is entwined with the scenery of my own native place. I see again, a tall, dignified lady, whose elastic step, age failed to chain. High intellect was hers, the stronger for being self-taught, and a place among the aristocracy, that she might the more plainly show the beauty of gentle man-

ners and a lowly heart. In the varieties of conversation, which, without pedantry or display, unveil extensive learning and suggestive thought, I have never known any of my own sex, her superior; I was about to have said, her equal. Fabrics of use and of taste, she wrought and ornamented, and with her delicate scissors, imitated the beauties and wonders of the animal and floral world. Children, she especially charmed by these efforts of her skill, as well as by her great descriptive powers, ever keeping in view their instruction as well as pleasure. Clustering around, they listened, holding their breath, lest they should lose a word. She also delighted them with the sweetness of her ancient and sacred songs, for to the verge of fourscore and ten, her musical powers remained, a source of wondering gratification to all around. Even now, those swan-like melodies that enchanted my earliest years, revisit me, rich, clear, and softened by the lapse of years, as if borne over untroubled waters.

The time would fail me to tell of her excellent knowledge in all that appertained to the domestic sphere; as it also would to mention other ladies in my own New England, who in the delicate elements of that great feminine attainment, good housekeeping, yielded neither energy or skill to the frosts of seventy years, but dexterously continued to touch every clock-work spring, on which the order and comfort of a blessed home depend.

I would venture to number among accomplishments, though the classification may be deemed rather antiquated, those simpler forms of feminine industry which promote comfort and respectability. A lady of eighty-four, in one of the smaller towns of Connecticut, took great pleasure in these unostentatious employments. During one year, she completed, at intervals of time, with her quiet knitting needles, forty-eight pairs of stockings, beside constructing from fragments of calico, two large bed-quilts, one of them containing more

than three thousand pieces, symmetrically arranged. The fabrics were principally for the accommodation and relief of needy persons; so, that with the peaceful consciousness of time industriously improved, was blent the higher satisfaction of benevolence: a wise exchange for the lassitude and morbid sense of uselessness which is sometimes suffered to steal like a canker over declining years.

It would be quite impossible here to enumerate, those of the other sex whom it has been my privilege to know, who in their various departments and professions, derived added dignity from age; merchants, whose mental acuteness time seemed to have refined; physicians, whose large experience gave such confidence to the sick as to prove an element of healing; jurists, whose time-tried judgments were as beaten gold; divines, whose silver locks were a talisman to the hearts of their hearers; statesmen, whose eloquence was never more fervid or vigorous than when their sun went down.

A gentleman, whose period of collegiate education had been cut short by the absorbing toils of a life at sea, having found in advanced years a haven of repose, resumed with zeal, the perusal of the classics, remarking, that after fourscore he had been led decidedly to prefer them to his native tongue, which was "so easy as not to keep the mind awake." I have often found him deeply engaged over the pages of Cicero, or Homer, in the original, his eye brightening at every gem of genius, and his florid complexion pure with temperance, reminding one of Miss Mitford's description of the beauty of her own venerable father.

A genius for the fine arts, we sometimes see evolved, at a late period of life. This has been the case with the adopted son of Washington, George W. P. Custis, Esq., who since the age of seventy, has executed a series of large historical paintings, representing prominent scenes in our Revolution, and presenting, in various attitudes, the *Pater Patriæ*,

with the warmth of a filial pencil. This fine, self-taught accomplishment, is associated with one of earlier acquisition, that of music; and the stirring melodies of other times, which occasionally echo through the lofty halls of Arlington, from the violin of their master, betray no indication that the frosts of fourscore have already settled upon his temples.

The efforts that sustain social intercourse, and the attractions that adorn it, are in our Republic, too soon laid aside. Of these, the gray-haired seem in haste to absolve themselves, as of a burden, or a sin. In France, they are kept in constant and prosperous exercise. The idea of being superannuated, seems not there to have entered the mind of the people. The aged are received in mixed society, as marked favorites, and bear their part with an inextinguishable naivete. Many instances of this, I beheld, with admiring wonder. One evening, in particular, I recollect being interested in watching Isabey, the celebrated miniature painter, of Paris,

who, with hair like the driven snow, glided through the mazes of the dance, at a state ball given by the elegant Marchioness Lavalette, the agility of his movements not at all impaired by more than eighty years, nor the graceful courtesy with which he delighted to introduce and bring into notice, his fair, young wife, while frequent allusions to their home, proved how affectionately their hearts turned thither amid all the gaieties of fashion.

Yet it is not in mercurial France alone, that men "frisk beneath the burden of fourscore." The philosophic Socrates, though not, indeed, at quite so ripe an age, used to dance, and play upon the lyre; one, to preserve his physical vigor, and the other to tune and elevate his mind with cheerfulness.

Macklin, after he had numbered a full century, appeared on the stage, and in the character of the Jew Shylock, held his audience in absorbed attention. He also successfully occupied himself in revising and remodelling his own dramatic compositions.

It will be said that these instances are exceptions, rather than examples that we may hope to reach. Of some, this is true; but from others we derive encouragement and hope. If at the age of eighty, Cato thought proper to go to school to learn Greek, why should we not consider ourselves scholars, as long as aught remains to be learned? Yes, life is ever a school, both in its discipline and its aspirations. Let us take our places in that class, who both learn and teach. We will speak of the manifold goodness of God, which we have so long tested, and strike that key-tone of praise, whose melody will be perfected in Heaven:—

“Yet oh! eternity’s too short,
To utter all His praise.”

Among the highest accomplishments of age, are its dispositions. It should daily cultivate the spirit to admire what is beautiful, to love what is good, and to be lenient to the faults of that infirm nature of which all are

partakers. As sensual pleasures lose their hold, the character should become more sublimated. While we would avoid that fixedness which repels new impressions, and resists improvements as innovations, let us seek the accomplishment of an active, unslumbering benevolence.

Dear friends, whom I love better for the linked sympathies of many years, do something to be remembered when you are gone. Let your words, either spoken or written, bring forth fruit when you are dead. Endow a school. Open a fountain. Plant a tree. Put a good book in a cottage, or a public library. It was a beautiful reply of a white-haired man, to the question why he should trouble himself to be setting out a pear-tree, who could scarcely hope to taste its fruits, "Have I all my life long, eaten from trees that the dead have planted, and shall not the living eat of mine?"

Let us hold to the spirit of progress, and the capabilities of improvement of this im-

mortal nature, as long as it sojourns in the flesh. "There is no reason," said a clear-minded philosopher, "why we should not make advances, as long as we are in a state of probation."

If our pilgrimage is almost finished, does that create a need to forfeit our admiration, or relax our pursuit of "whatsoever is fair, lovely, or of good report?" "Excelsior," may as well be our motto, at the close, as at the commencement of life's journey.

If we are indeed, so near the Better Land, as to catch the whispers of its camp, hear we not, in a great voice, as of many harpers, the inspiring strain, "Forgetting the things that are behind, reach forth unto those that are before!" and is there not in our own hearts, an answering chant, as of antiphonal music, "Not as though we had attained, or were already perfect. But we follow after."

CHAPTER X.

The Privileges of Age.

“ Say ye, who through the round of eighty years
Have prov'd life's joys and sorrows, hopes and fears,
Say, is there not enough to meekness given,
Of light from reason's lamp, and light from Heaven,
To teach us where to follow, what to shun,
Or bow the head and say, God's righteous will be done ? ”

MRS. BARBAULD.

THE motto here selected, was composed by the venerable author, after she had passed the bounds of fourscore. In her well-regulated mind there was no disposition to disparage the comforts that linger around the later stages of human life. Why should this ever be the case ? Many of its enjoyments have, indeed, run their course; their lease having expired by limitation of time. Yet others remain,

the birth-right of advanced years, which it is both unjust and unwise, not to appreciate.

We have spoken of the *privileges of age*. Has it in reality, any inherent honors, emoluments, or immunities, to justify such an assumption ?

Originally, it was in possession of a charter, sanctioned by divine authority, demanding reverence for the hoary head, and for the counsel of those to whom years had given wisdom. Modern times have modified this distinction. Our own republic has been pronounced by observant foreigners, deficient in the sentiment of respect. Still, among well-trained and noble natures, there will be ever a disposition to honor those who have long and well borne the burdens of time, and a veneration for the "hoary head, if found in the way of righteousness."

Should we inquire if age has any emolument, we are reminded of the wealth of experience. Are not the whole beautiful, ever-moving world of the young, in poverty

for the want of it ? searching, trying, tasting, snatching at garlands and grasping thorns, chasing meteors, embarking on fathomless tides, and in danger of being swallowed up by quicksands ? The aged, through toil and hazard, through the misery of mistake, or the pains of penitence, have won it. Safe in their casket, are gems polished by long attrition, and gold-dust, well-washed, perchance, in fountains of tears.

“ Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, for it bears a laden
breast,
Still, with sage experience, moving toward the brightness of the
west.”

Has age any immunities ? Its sources of revenue seem to be negative rather than positive. It has probably dissolved partnership with personal vanity. And was not that a losing concern ? There remains no consciousness of beauty, no feverish hope of admiration, no undue excitement of competition, no bewilderment from flattery, to put out of sight higher purposes, or exclude more rational

pleasures. The consequent gain, both of leisure and quiet, must be great. Has it not also a respite from the toils of money-getting, from that science of accumulation which is but practical slavery? It is surely time. Having borne the yoke for many years, rising early, and late taking rest, and eating the bread of carefulness, it would be desirable to taste the sweets of such enfranchisement, while yet "the lamp holds out to burn."

In age, is not the over-mastering force of the passions broken? Is it as irascible at opposition as when the current of life rushed fiercely on, battling all obstacles with the impetuosity of a cataract? Is it still led in blind and deep captivity as of yore, by

"Love, Hope and Joy, fair Pleasure's syren train,
Hate, Fear and Grief, the family of Pain?"

If a more serene and self-sustained philosophy is a natural concomitant of age, is it not a privilege for which to give thanks?

Yet not in exemptions alone, do the advan-

tages of the aged consist. Have they not more aid, and stronger promptings to disinterestedness, than in the earlier stages of their journey? The young acquire accomplishments, that they may be distinguished, or admired; the old strive to continue agreeable, that they may please or edify others. The man of mature years toils to achieve wealth, as a means of influence; the study of the old is, or should be, how to dispense it. Their business is to shower back upon the earth, the gifts she has bestowed, having no further expectation from her, save of a couch in her bosom. Since those who have the slightest admixture of self, escape countless discomforts by which others are annoyed, the aged are assisted by their condition, to find that happiness which is more independent of "things that perish in the using."

"That which they are, they are,
Made weak by time, perchance, but strong in will,
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield."

If to compensate for the visible losses of

time, there are correspondent gains, less obvious, but still secure, it concerns all to understand their amount, that they may be able to balance the books, ere the Master calleth for an account of their stewardship. An ancient writer has well remarked, that Nature, after having wisely distributed to all the preceding portions of life, their peculiar and proper enjoyments, can scarcely be supposed to have neglected, like an indolent poet, the last act of the human drama, and left it destitute of suitable advantages.

The God of nature has decreed to every season of life, its inherent happiness, and fitness for the end it was intended to serve. In spring, fair blossoms glow even among the grass-blades, and in summer, the fruit-laden boughs are clothed with beauty. Vigorous autumn comes with his reaping-hook, and peaceful age awaiteth the Lord of the harvest. Not unmindful of its privileges, or reluctant to restore the mysterious gift of life, should it watch for His coming.

Age should clothe itself with love, to resist the loneliness of its lot. Yet it sometimes cherishes a morbid and mistaken consciousness that it no longer retains the power of conciliating affection. It has been beautifully said that "the heart is as warm after life's day's-work is over, as when it began; after the harness of manhood is cast off, as before it was put on. The love generally felt for genial and kindly old persons, with their unselfish sympathies, their tried judgment, and their half-mournful tenderness toward those they are soon to leave, has not been enough remembered in poetry. Their calm, reliable affection, is like the Indian summer of friendship."

The aged, especially those whose conquest of self is imperfect, are prone to under-rate the advantages that remain. Their minds linger among depressing subjects, repining for what "time's effacing fingers" will never restore. Far better would it be to muse on their privileges, to recount them, and to rejoice in them. Many instances have I wit-

nessed, both of this spirit, and the want of it, which left enduring impressions.

I well remember an ancient dwelling, sheltered by lofty, umbrageous trees, and with all the appendages of rural comfort. A fair prospect of hill and dale, and broad river, and distant spire, cheered the vine-covered piazzas, through whose loop-holes, with the subdued cry of the steam-borne cars, the world's great Babel made a dash at the picture without coming too near. Traits of agricultural life, divested of its rude and sordid toils, were pleasantly visible. A smooth-coated, and symmetrical cow, ruminated over her clover-meal. A faithful horse, submissive to the gentlest rein, protruded his honest face through the barn window. A few brooding mothers, were busied with the nurture of their chickens, while the proud father of the flock, told with a clarion-voice, his happiness. There were trees, whose summer fruits were richly swelling, and bushes of ripening berries, and gardens of choice vegetables. Those

who from the hot and dusty city, came to breathe the pure air of this sylvan retreat, took note of these "creature-comforts," and thought they added beauty to the landscape.

Within the abode, fair pictures and books of no mean literature adorned the parlors ; in the carpeted kitchen, ticked the stately old family-clock, while the bright dishes stood in orderly array upon the speckless shelves. Visitants could not but admire that union of taste and education, which makes rural life beautiful. It might seem almost as an Elysium, where care would delight to repose, or philosophy to pursue her researches without interruption. But to any such remark, the excellent owner was wont mournfully to reply,

"Here are only two old people together. Our children are married and gone. Some of them are dead. We cannot be expected to have much enjoyment."

Oh, dear friends, but it is expected that you should. Your very statement of the

premises, is an admission of peculiar sources of comfort.

“ *Two old people together.*” Whose sympathies can be so perfect? And is not sympathy a source of happiness? Side by side ye have walked, through joys and sorrows. You have tried the refiner’s fire, that fuses hearts into one. You have stood by the grave’s brink, when it swallowed up your idols, and the iron that entered into your souls formed a living link, that time might never destroy. Under the cloud, and through the sea, you have walked hand in hand, heart to heart. What subjects of communion must you have, with which no other human being could intermeddle.

“ *Two old people.*” Would your experience be so rich and profound, if you were not old? or your congeniality so entire, if one was old, and the other young? What a blessing that you can say, there are *two* of us. Can you realize the loneliness of soul that must gather around the words, “*left alone!*” How many

of memory's cherished pictures must then be viewed through blinding tears? how feelingly the expression of the poet adopted, "'tis the survivor dies?"

"*Our children are married and gone.*" Would you have it otherwise? Was it not fitting for them to comply with the institution of their Creator? Is it not better than if they were all at home, without congenial employment, pining with disappointed hope, or in solitude of the heart? *Married and gone!* To implant in other homes, the virtues they have learned from you. Perchance, in newer settlements to diffuse the energy of right habits, and the high influence of pure principles. *Gone!* to learn the luxury of life's most intense affections, and wisely to train their own young blossoms, for time and for eternity. Praise God that it is so.

"*Some are dead.*" They have gone a little before. They have shown you the way through that gate where all the living must pass. Will not their voice of welcome be

sweet in the skies ? Dream ye not sometimes that ye hear the echo of their harp-strings ? Is not your eternal home brought nearer, and made dearer by them ? *Praise God.*

I once knew an aged couple, who for more than sixty years had dwelt in one home, and with one heart. Wealth was not theirs, nor the appliances of luxury, yet the plain house in which they had so long lived, was their own. Humble in every appointment, that they might keep free from debt, they were respected by people in the highest positions, for it was felt that they set a right example in all things. Every little gift, or token of remembrance from friends, and all who knew them were friends, awakened the fresh warmth of gratitude. Though their portion of this world's goods was small, benevolence being inherent in their nature, found frequent expression. Always they had by them, some book of slight expense, but of intrinsic value, to be given as a guide to the young, the ignorant, or the tempted. Cor-

dials also, and simple medicines for debility, or incipient disease, they distributed to the poor, for they were skillful in extracting the spirit of health from herbs, and a part of the garden cultivated by their own hands, was a dispensary. Kind, loving words had they for all, the fullness of their heart's content, brimming over in bright drops, to refresh those around.

That venerable old man, and vigorous, his temples slightly silvered, when more than fourscore years had visited them, how freely flowed forth the melody of his leading voice, amid the sacred strains of public worship. His favorite tunes of Mear and Old Hundred, wedded to these simply sublime words,

“While shepherds watched their flocks by night,”

and

“Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,”

seem even now to fall sweetly, as they did upon my childish ear. These, and similar ancient harmonies, mingled with the devout

prayers that morning and evening, hallowed his home and its comforts; she, the loved partner of his days, being often, sole auditor. Thus, in one censer, rose the praise, which every day seemed to deepen. God's goodness palled not on their spirits, because it had been long continued. They rejoiced that it was "new every morning, and fresh every moment."

By the clear, wood-fire in winter, sate the aged wife, with serene brow, skillfully busy in preparation or repair of garments, as perfect neatness and economy dictated; while by the evening lamp, her bright knitting-needles moved with quickened zeal, as she remembered the poor child, or wasted invalid, in some cold apartment, for which they were to furnish a substantial covering.

In the later years of life, their childless abode was cheered by the presence of a young orphan relative. She grew under their shadow with great delight, conforming her pliant heart to their wishes, and to the

pattern of their godly simplicity. When they were seated together, she read to them such books as they chose, and treasured their Christian counsel. Her voice in the morning, was to them as the carol of the lark, and they seemed to live again a new life in her young life. She was to them "like the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valley."

Love for the sweet helplessness of unfolding years, seemed to increase with their own advancing age. Little children, who know by instinct where love is, would draw near them, and stand lamb-like at their side. Thus they passed on, until more than ninety years had been numbered to them. They were not weary of themselves, or of each other, or of this beautiful world. Neither was Time weary of bringing them, letter by letter, the full alphabet of a serene happiness, and when extreme age added the Omega, they were well-educated to begin the bliss of Eternity.

CHAPTER XI.

Literary Longevity.

“ Their age was like a second winter,
Frosty, but kindly.”

SHAKSPEARE.

AN opinion has been expressed that literary labors, or habitual excursions into the regions of imagination, are adverse to the continuance of health, or even the integrity of intellect. Grave charges, truly ! and examples to the contrary, may be easily adduced.

Premature death, and mental declension, are confined to no profession or condition of life. Too early, or undue stress laid on the organs of the brain, is doubtless fraught with disastrous consequences. Still, their constant, and even severe exercise, may comport both with physical welfare and longevity.

It is indeed, true, that Swift “expired a driveller and a show,” but not until he had passed seven years beyond the span allotted to human life; and the amiable author of the “Task,” closed his pilgrimage in a rayless cloud, at sixty-six; and Walter Scott sank at sixty-one, under toils too ambitiously pursued for the safe union of flesh with spirit; and Southey, whose reckless industry precluded needful rest, subsided ere sixty-eight, into syncope and the shadow of darkness; and Henry Kirke White faded at twenty-one, in the fresh blossom of his young renown; and Byron at thirty-six, rent the fiery armor of genius and of passion, and fled from the conflict of life.

Yet Goethe, unimpaired by the strong excitements of imagination, saw his eighty-second winter; and the sententious architect of the “Night Thoughts,” reached fourscore and four; and Voltaire, at the same period, was still in love with the vanity of fame; and Corneille continued to enjoy his laurels till

seventy-eight ; and Crabbe, at an equal age, resigned the pen which had sketched with daguerreotype minuteness the passing scene. Joseph Warton, until his seventy-ninth year, made his mental riches and cheerful piety sources of delight to all around him ; Charles Wesley, on the verge of eighty, called his wife to his dying pillow, and with an inexpressible smile, dictated his last metrical effusion ; and Klopstock, the bard of the "Messiah," continued until the same period to cheer and delight his friends. Isaac Watts, laid down his consecrated harp at seventy-four ; and our own Trumbull, the author of "McFingal," preserved till eighty-two, the bright, clear intellect, whose strains had animated both the camp and the cottage. The illustrious Metastasio detained the admiring ear of Italy, until eighty-four ; and Milton, at sixty-six, opened his long-eclipsed eyes on "cloudless light serene," leaving to the world the mournful memories of "Lost Paradise," with living strains of heroic and

sublime counsel. Mason was seventy-two, ere the "holy earth," where his "dead Maria" slumbered, admitted him to share her repose; and the tender Petrarch, and the brave old John Dryden, told out fully their seventy years, and the ingenious La Fontaine, seventy-four; while Fontenelle, whose powers of sight and hearing extended their ministrations to the unusual term of ninety-six years, lacked only the revolution of a few moons to complete his entire century.

Those masters of the Grecian lyre, Anacreon, the sweet Sophocles, and the fiery-souled Pindar, felt no frost of intellect, but were transplanted as evergreens, in the winter of fourscore; at the same advanced period, Wordsworth, in our own times, continued to mingle the music of his lay with the murmur of Rydal's falling water, and Joanna Baillie, to fold around her the robe of tragic power, enjoying until her ninetieth year, the friendship of the good, and the fruits of a fair renown; Montgomery, the religious poet, so

long a cherished guest, amid the romantic scenery of Sheffield, has just departed at the age of eighty-two; and Rogers, who gave us in early life, the "Pleasures of Memory," now, the most venerable poet in Europe, and probably in the world, is cheered at ninety-three, with the love of all who ever came within the sphere of his amiable virtues.

So much for the poets, who have been accused of burning out the wheels of life, in the flames of passion and the vagaries of imagination.

"The solace of song," says Southey, "certainly mitigates the sufferings of the wounded spirit. I have sorrowed deeply, and found comfort in thus easing my mind; though much of what I wrote at such times, I have never let the world see."

True Poetry has also affinity with the higher harmonies of our being,—with religion and its joys. Gathering the beautiful from nature, and soaring into the realm of fancy for what reality withholds, she feeds her

children on angels' food. She looks to the stars, and hears melodies that are above their courses.

Of wits and humorists, Cervantes fed on his own mirthful conceptions, to the verge of threescore and ten, and Lady Mary Wortley Montague, until two years beyond it, indulged her lively and capricious temperament; and Sidney Smith, at seventy-six, retained in a remarkable degree his intellectual keenness and originality.

Literary pursuits seem not to have been adverse to the happiness or longevity of females. Mrs. Hoffland and Miss Jane Porter, reached seventy-four, in dignity and honor; Mrs. Chapone, seventy-five; Mrs. Piozzi, the biographer of Dr. Johnson, eighty-one; Miss Burney, eighty-eight; Mrs. Carter, eighty-nine; and the venerated Hannah More, died only one year younger, having with indefatigable industry, composed eleven books, after she had numbered her sixtieth birthday. Mrs. Elizabeth Montague, and Mrs.

Sherwood, lived to be eighty-one ; and Mrs. Barbauld, to a more advanced age. Of the latter, it was said by Mrs. Mary L. Ware, who visited her in 1823, "Though now eighty-two, she possesses her faculties in full perfection ; her manner is peculiarly gentle, her voice low and sweet, and she speaks of death with such firm hope, that I felt as if I were communing with a spiritual body."

Didactic and philosophical writers, seem often, in their calm researches, to have found refuge from that strife of thought which embitters or shortens existence.

Plato, wove for the men of Attica, his beautiful and sublime theories, to the age of eighty-one ; and at eighty-five, John Evelyn closed his eyes at his fair estate in Wotton, which he had embellished both as a naturalist and an author, engraving on his marble monument, as the result of long experience,, that "all is vanity which is not honest, and that there is no solid wisdom but in real piety." The diligent and acute Bentley, reached four-

score; and Walker, seventy-five; and Dr. Samuel Johnson, "whose name is a host," attained the same age, having with characteristic energy applied himself to the study of the Dutch language, but a short time before his death. Scaliger and Parkhurst fell only a few months short of threescore and ten; Ainsworth passed three years beyond it; Dr. Noah Webster, of our own New England, retained unimpaired until eighty-four, his physical and mental health, with the rich store of his varied attainments. Lindley Murray, at more than eighty, continued in the active duties of Christian philanthropy; and the philologist, Mitscherlich, the Nestor of the German schools, and uncle to the famous chemist of that name, died recently at Gottingen, at the age of ninety-three. Sir Isaac Newton, as illustrious for Christian humility as for intellectual greatness, laid down his earthly honors at eighty-five; and Franklin, who in the words of Mirabeau, "stole the lightning from Heaven, and the sceptre from

tyrants," cheered us with the mild radiance of his philanthropy till eighty-four; and Herschel rose above the stars, with which he had long communed, at eighty, while his sister, whom he had so kindly made the companion of his celestial intercourse, survived until ninety-seven. Yet it was not our intention to gather from the lists of science, its multiplied examples of ripe age and rare fame, but rather devote our prescribed limits to the affinities of literature with longevity.

The sympathies that spring from community of labor in the field of intellect, are salutary and graceful. Those minds that are above the petty asperities of rivalry, have often thus enjoyed a friendship of singular depth and fervor. This seems to have been the case with many of the distinguished writers of England's Augustan age. Frequent association led to intimacy of plan and pursuit. They criticised each other's works, and in the attrition of kindred spirits, found that as "iron sharpeneth iron, so doth the

countenance of a man, his friend." It has been finely said of Pope, that he "reverenced his equals in genius, and that of those friends who surpassed him, he spoke with respect and admiration." Of Gay it was asserted, by one of his literary associates, that "every body loved him." Even the witty and sarcastic Swift, shrank to open a letter which he feared might announce the fatal termination of a sickness that oppressed this friend. It lay long on his cabinet, unsealed, and was afterward endorsed by him, as communicating the mournful event of his "dear friend Gay's decease, received December 15th, but not read until five days after, by an impulse foreboding some misfortune." One would scarcely have expected such sentimentality from the fierce-tempered Dean of St. Patrick's; but literary friendship softened him. The intellectual communion of Addison and Steele, cemented an interesting attachment; and the majestic old Johnson, though with less of mental congeniality for Goldsmith, still, with

affectionate regard, excused his eccentricities, praised his talents, and rejoiced in his reputation.

This amiable and salubrious element of intellectual intercourse, is by no means confined to any particular age, or country. In Germany, where native and noble impulse is the least fettered by conventionalism ; in France, where genius and the labors of literature, open the gate of distinction more readily than a key of gold ; and in our own free land, where more than in any other, knowledge is the heritage and glory of the people, there are many examples of unity of heart between those, who in different departments, advance the great work of mental progress.

The Lake Poets, Wordsworth, Southey, and Coleridge, beautifully attested the brotherhood of genius, until the "threefold cord" was sundered at the tomb.

Much of this affectionate, generous sympathy between gifted minds, seemed to me to exist in Great Britain, and though I was there

too late to witness it in those most genial spirits, Sir Walter Scott, and Mrs. Hemans, its sweet revealings were manifested by Maria Edgeworth, and Joanna Baillie, as well as by many younger and distinguished authors, who still live to bless us.

May I be forgiven if I here add a little episode to please myself? an interview at Hampstead, which Memory cherishes among her pencil-sketches.

It was a brighter vernal day than often occurs under English skies, when I drove thither from London, to see Joanna Baillie. I found her seated on the sofa, in her pleasant parlor, surrounded by many pictures, herself to me, the most pleasant picture, of dignified and healthful age. On her cheek was somewhat more of color than usual, for she had just returned from a long walk among her poor pensioners, and the exercise, and the comfort of active benevolence, lent new life and expression to her smile. She was not handsome, at least, so the world said; her high

cheek bones bespoke her Scottish extraction, and seventy-six years had absorbed any charm that youth might have bestowed ; yet to my eye she was beautiful. On the same sofa was her sister, Agnes, whom she so intensely loved, and to whom one of her sweetest poetical effusions was addressed. Though several years beyond fourscore, her complexion was singularly fair, her features symmetrical, and her demeanor graceful and attractive. Between them, was seated Rogers, the banker-poet, with locks like the driven snow, having come out several miles from his mansion in St. James' Park, to make them a friendly call. His smooth brow, and fresh flow of conversation, made it difficult to believe that this could be indeed, his eightieth spring. It seems he had been kindly advising the authoress of "Plays of the Passions," to collect her fugitive poems, from their wide-spread channels, into the more enduring form of a volume. As she felt disinclined to the

labor, he had himself undertaken and accomplished it, and was now discussing the success of the publication, and enjoying the high suffrages of criticism, as if they were his own. While their cheering, joyous tones, so pleasantly blended, and mental communion and service seemed to have given them new youth, or rather to have kept it perennial, I felt that the world could not furnish another such trio, and was grateful for the privilege of beholding it.

Even now, I imagine that I hear the voice of the venerable poet, whom I still rejoice to number among my living friends, repeating with deliberate intonation and perfect emphasis, his favorite passage from Mrs. Barbauld, who herself resided in the immediate vicinity, at Hampstead. It was written in extreme old age, but with unfaded vigor of intellect.

“Life ! we’ve been long together,
Through pleasant and through cloudy weather,
’Tis hard to part where friends are dear,
Perhaps ’twill cost both pang and tear :

So, steal away, give little warning,
Choose thine own time,
Say not good night, but in yon happier clime,
Bid me good morning."

Among those who have made the highest interests of the soul their study, and by pen and voice striven to promote them, are many instances of healthful adjustment of structure to profession, and the protracted use of those powers which they kept in active exercise.

Thomas a Kempis, whose writings filled three folio volumes, and whose principal work, "The Imitation of Christ," was composed at the age of sixty, reached his ninety-second year, not only with an unimpaired mind, but with the perfect use of eye-sight, unaided by spectacles. At the same advanced period was Bishop Wilson removed, whose "Sacra Privata" still breathes like living incense on the heart's altar. Scarcely three years younger was our own Bishop White, the beauty of whose silver locks, and saintly smile, and holy teachings, concur in deepening

ing the Saviour's precept, that all Christians should love each other. John Wesley was enabled to persevere in his labors, till eighty-eight, having before he reached his seventieth year, published more than thirty octavo volumes. On his seventy-second birth-day, he writes:

“I have been considering how it is, that I should feel just the same strength that I did, thirty years ago; that my sight is even considerably better, and my nerves firmer than they were then; that I have none of the infirmities of age, and have lost several that I had in my youth. The great cause is the good pleasure of God, who doeth whatever pleaseth Him. The chief means are, first my constant rising at four, for the last fifty years; second, my generally preaching at five in the morning, one of the most healthful exercises in the world; and thirdly, my never traveling less, by sea and land, than four thousand miles a year.”

Theodore Beza, lived to be eighty-six, and Hoadley, eighty-five; Lardner was a year younger at his death, and John Newton, four-score and two. Warburton closed his learned labors at eighty-one; and Lowth and Porteus

and Simeon, completed their Christian example at seventy-seven ; and Richard Baxter at seventy-six, rose from the "Saint's Rest," which he so touchingly depicted, to that "Certainty of the World of Spirits," which he serenely anticipated. Archbishop Secker, at seventy-five, taught how saints can die ; and William Jones, of Nayland, and Thomas Scott, the commentator, passed from faithful service to their great reward, at the age of seventy-four ; and Bishop Andrews, the master of fifteen languages, who was appointed by James First, one of the principal translators of our present version of the Scriptures, continued until seventy-one, his untiring toils and devoted charities. Beveridge closed his pious pilgrimage at seventy ; and George Fox, at sixty-six ; and John Foster, the forcible essayist, at seventy-three.

Connected with the thoughtful and impressive image of the last-named author, is that of another, seen at about the same period, in his native Scotland, and also a minister of

the Baptist persuasion,—William Innes, of Edinburgh. He was then at the age of seventy, in the habit of varying the toils of the pulpit and the study, by a summer excursion on foot, to the Highlands, where, being able to preach in their native tongue, he collected large audiences, who listened to the words of salvation with rivetted attention. From this missionary service, the only recreation that he sought during a year's strenuous labor, he would return with elastic step, a cheering smile, and cheek and lip so florid with health that it was difficult to believe that he had indeed reached so advanced a period. He still lives at the age of eighty-three, and leads a beloved flock in their Sabbath worship.

The Rev. William Jay, from the age of sixteen, when he began to preach the gospel, was enabled to continue until eighty-six, in that holy service, laboring, writing or speaking for God, and encircled to his last moment with loving hearts and the reverence of mankind.

A still surviving instance of protracted use-

fulness and honor, is that of Dr. Routh, who has sustained the office of President of Magdalen College, Oxford, for sixty-three years, and entered about two months since, his ninety-ninth year. This learned and venerable man, retains good health, high intellect, and warm, social feelings. In his exercise of hospitality and benevolence, there is no declension; that there is also none in the respect and appreciation of the students over whom he presides, is expressed in the following brief extract from their affectionate tribute on his birth-day, September 20th, 1853.

“In studious care a century well nigh past,
Three generations ROUTH’s fresh powers outlast;
A NESTOR’s snows his reverend temples grace,
A NESTOR’s vigor in his mind we trace.
Judgment not yet on her tribunal sleeps;
Her faithful record cloudless Memory keeps;
Nor eye nor hand their ministry decline,
The letter’d toils or service of the Nine.
Yet through his heart the genial current flows,
Yet in his breast the warmth of friendship glows:
On rites of hospitality intent,
Toward Christian courtesy his thoughts are bent;

While from his lips, which guile nor flattery know,
“Prophetic strains” of “old experience” flow.
A blessing rest upon thy sacred head,
Time-honor’d remnant of “the mighty dead,”
Through whom Oxonia’s sons exulting trace
Their stainless lineage from a better race.
Still may thy saintly course their beacon shine,
Still round their heartstrings thy meek wisdom twine,
Still be their loyal, loving homage thine;
And tardy may the heavenward summons come,
Which calls thee from thy sojourn to thy home.”

It should here be mentioned that he has just completed a volume, consisting of selections from the ancient fathers, with emendations and an introduction, intended as the prolongation of an extensive work composed some years since, with the title of “*Reliquiæ Sacræ*.”

The power of fine writing sometimes remains unimpaired with the septuagenarians, and even to the later evening of life. I think at this moment, of two volumes recently issued from the press, in which Professor Silliman, of Yale College, so long the editor of the “*American Journal of Science*,” and

now in his seventy-sixth year, has delineated an extensive tour in Europe. Compared with another work of his, published nearly half a century since, and describing a similar excursion to foreign climes, they yield nothing of grace, brilliance, or vigor, but might seem rather to have the advantage over their predecessor. Their admixture of science, so appropriate to his own profession, with the drapery of narrative, gives them, as it were, bone and muscle, by which to stand erect, and move among the people. Over their author, also, changeful time has had little power. He has just returned, unfatigued, from a journey of some four thousand miles, to the Far West, enjoying the varied scenery with as keen a zest as ever, and adding to the happiness of the large party with which he traveled; especially entering into the pleasures of the young, with the cheerfulness of an unclouded spirit.

His fine, manly form is still unbent, his unspectacled eyes daunted by no obscurity of

type or chirography, and his urbanity and hospitality in full exercise. Long may they thus continue.

“The Gospel its own Advocate,” a work from the pen of George Griffin, LL. D., of New York, after he had numbered more than threescore and ten, shows the research of a mind disciplined by the severe studies of jurisprudence, accustomed to weigh contending claims, to throw words into the crucible and through all their fermentations watch for the witnessings of truth. It embodies the force of a clear intellect, and the conclusions of a long life. The learned author, now in his seventy-seventh year, still endued with vigor of mind and body, might in his hours of literary labor, have readily selected from the wide range of nature, or the familiar archives of history, a theme more accordant with the taste and spirit of the times, but religiously chose in this, as well as in a previous work, to devote the gathered lights of his

experience to the defence and illustration of that gospel wherein is our hope.

The Memoir of the late Rev. Dr. Croswell, of Boston, by the venerable Dr. Croswell, of New Haven, Connecticut, an octavo of more than five hundred pages, is undoubtedly the most affecting as well as judicious tribute that a man of genius and piety ever received from a father of almost fourscore years. Girding himself to lay in the grave the beloved one, who, according to the order of nature, should have closed his own dying eyes, instead of sinking under so great a sorrow, he rouses himself, and with the same zeal and patience with which in his hoary age he still ministers at the sanctuary, constructs a monument which will endure when brass and marble perish.

An interesting catalogue might, doubtless, be made of authors, who, after the period of seventy, or even of eighty years, have continued to interest and instruct mankind. Hannah More wrote her work on "Prayer," at

seventy-six; and Richard Cumberland, his poem on "Retrospection," at seventy-nine. Dr. Blair, so celebrated for his "Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres," persevered in his literary labors until very late in life, and was occupied in preparing an additional volume of sermons, when death took the pen from his hand, in his eighty-second winter.

At the same advanced age, Walter Savage Landor, retains the force and elasticity which have always characterized his style, and is at present engaged in editing a work entitled, "Letters of an American." At his pleasant home in Bath, England, he is still in possession of health, and of that peculiar wit, which in earlier life, irradiated his "Imaginary Conversations," and gave him rank among men of genius.

Still, it is not my purpose here, to make a list of those who have continued in age to win reputation by their writings, but simply through a desultory selection of examples, to illustrate a theory sometimes advanced, that

the mind may expand and ripen, to the extreme of human life. The only reason to the contrary, is the disease or decay of those organs through which it receives and conveys impressions. By the foregoing instances, as well as others that might be adduced, it will appear that there is no necessary connection between this declension and their diligent use. Indeed, through the action of the brain, the nervous system may doubtless be so developed as to acquire even a more vigorous tone.

The fever of literary ambition, the rivalry of authorship, the morbid and insatiable thirst for popularity, are not numbered among the sanitary tendencies, or worthy ends of intellectual effort. Neither of the abuse of God's great gift of genius to the gratification of selfish and depraved tastes, have I wished to speak, but rather of its unison with the highest responsibilities,—of its open harmony with the perennial flow of the springs of life,—and of the long peace with which the Great Task-Master hath sometimes seen fit to crown it.

If the employment of a teacher has been considered favorable to longevity, from the cheering influences of companionship with the young, on the same principle, an indwelling with fresh and beautiful thoughts, should aid in preserving the youth of the mind. If in suggesting good feelings, and a holy practice to others, there is any development of sympathies, that makes even strangers dear, any solace for joys that are withheld, or have departed, it must be congenial to moral, as well as to mental and physical prosperity.

Literature, like those fields of benevolence in which all Christians can agree, offers a fair meeting-ground of compromise and of peace. It has room enough and to spare. Its laborers may come and go, as brethren, and not impede each other. They may glean in safety, all day, like the true-hearted Moabiteess, and "at night, beat out what they have gathered," while the world, like the expectant Naomi, will bless them.

We, the people who have past their prime,

should rejoice that so many of our own hoary-headed band, have been enabled to leave so many enduring traces on the sands of time. For if the satisfactions of rural life, the transmuting of the unsightly mould into fruits and flowers, are so soothing and salutary, should it not be held desirable to plant in the mental soil, trees whose "leaves are for the healing of the nations?" If the founders of those time-honored edifices, on which the storms of ages have beaten in vain, are regarded with reverence, is it not a privilege to be permitted to rear in the realm of intellect, columns on whose Corinthian capital, lingers the smile of Heaven as a never-setting sun?

CHAPTER XII.

Westering Sunbeams.

“ Argue not
Against Heaven’s hand or will, nor bate a jot
Of heart or hope ; but still bear up, and steer
Right onward.

MILTON.

How beautiful is the setting sun. Long lines of golden rays tremble along the horizon ; crimson and purple like the banner of a king, go floating up the zenith. As a benefactor he retires from the scenes he has blessed, and through the calm twilight men tenderly remember him.

Thus should a good life draw to its close, fruitful in benefits, and glowing with reflected love, until the evening star hangs out its silver crescent. Thus should its westering sun-

beams be treasured in the grateful hearts which have been cheered by its path of radiance.

A selfish old age must be of necessity, an unhappy one. It is an indwelling with losses; lost comeliness, lost vigor, lost pleasure, lost importance among the bright and swift current of moving things. The hopeless search for what is departed, depresses the spirits and prepares them to partake in the declension that marks the body. If whatever brings the mind into bondage must impair its force; the decay of memory, of judgment the adjunct to memory, and of self-respect which in a measure depends on both, is more likely to occur and become palpable among aged persons who think principally and permanently of themselves. It is cause for thankfulness if through the affections, the charities, or the trials of life, they have been taught to lower their own expectations from a world they are soon to leave. Salutory and lovely is God's discipline with those whose

long pilgrimage is nearly finished ; withdrawing the props on which they leaned, loosening the heartstrings that were too closely or proudly earth-bound, that the Soul, ere she tries her unfettered wing, may “spring up and take strong hold on Him who made her.”

It is pleasant to recall whatever of brilliance we may have seen gather around the western gate of life, and preserve it as a guiding light for the feet of others. How noble was the bravery with which the poet Dryden battled the storms of fortune, lifting an unquenched spirit like a torch amid rocks and waves. When he might through age have naturally wished to relax the pressure of literary labor, he was stimulated anew by his paternal affections. Just on the verge of his seventieth year he was apprised of the approaching return of his son from Rome, in a feeble state of health; and though he had scarcely completed the task of preparing the second edition of his translation of Virgil for the press, he took no breathing time, but im-

mediately contracted to supply a bookseller with ten thousand verses, at sixpence a line, saying pathetically of his invalid child, "I can not spend my life better than in preserving his."

Among the men, who taking in their hand, "their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor," gave their signature to the Magna Charta of our national freedom, quite a number were appointed to length of days, with unfaded renown. The Hon. William Ellery of Newport, who from the memorable era of 1776, continued nine years a member of Congress, afterward took his seat as chief justice of the superior court of Rhode Island. When the age of seventy released him from this office, he accepted that of collector of customs for his native city, affectionately serving her to the day of his death, which took place at the age of ninety-three. So social and agreeable was he, notwithstanding his advanced age, and such powers of vivid and graphic narration did he continue to possess,

that the young sought his company for their own pleasure.

It was on the morning of his death, February 15th, 1820, that his family physician called, not professionally, but as a friend, to enjoy for half an hour his delightful society. In his usual health, he was seated in his arm-chair, reading Cicero de Officiis. But while the tide of conversation flowed freely and brightly on, the quick eye of the medical man detected a change in his venerated companion. He was laid upon the bed, but resumed reading the page which was interesting him when his friend entered. Gently the pulse ceased its motion, and the unclouded mind glided from its tenement of clay. Deep humility of spirit was the gift of this extraordinary man, and a firmness in duty, not influenced by human applause or blame. The wheels of life moved more calmly, and perhaps longer, from the serene temperament of his religion, which under every obstacle or misfortune solaced his own soul and that

of others with the sublime precept, "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice."

The sunbeams of usefulness have sometimes lingered to a late period around the heads of those who had taken part in the pioneer hardships of our new settlements. I think now of one, but recently deceased, at the age of eighty-five—Judge Burnett, who was numbered among the founders of Ohio, that state which sprang from its cradle with the vigor of a giant. After the completion of his classical and legal studies, he exchanged his fair ancestral home in New Jersey for a residence in Cincinnati, then in its rudest stages of development. As he climbed the steep river-bank he saw only scattered cabins, a few framed buildings and a log fort, making the frontier of civilized life. Conforming his habits to those of an unrefined community, and claiming but a few physical comforts, he exercised his profession in the courts of Detroit and Vincennes, when traveling was by bridle paths, by blazed trees, fording wild streams

and camping on the wet ground. Educated in the school of Washington and of Hamilton, who were honored guests in his father's house during the forming period of his life, he nobly dispersed around him the wealth of an upright and polished mind. By persevering industry and moral and religious worth, he won general confidence: and in due time a seat in the senate of the United States, and upon the bench of the supreme court of Ohio, attested the respect of the people. Population spread around him like the pageantry of a dream, and Cincinnati, among whose rudiments his manly hand had wrought, echoed ere his departure to the rushing tread of 130,000 inhabitants. His health had been originally feeble, but the endurance of hardship, and what is still more remarkable, the access of years, confirmed it. At more than fourscore he moved through the streets with as erect a form, an eye as intensely bright, and colloquial powers as free and fascinating, as at thirty. When full of knowledge and benev-

olence, and with an unimpaired intellect, he passed away, it was felt that not only one of the fathers of a young land had fallen, but that one of the bright and beautiful lights of society had been extinguished.

Of Daniel Webster, it was affirmed that the clearness of his own great mind continued to increase and to flow forth with even a fuller radiance at seventy than in his prime. Like the reformer Wycliffe, he was more and more "intent upon being understood, intent upon imparting the conviction or passion of his own mind to other minds." With this singleness of purpose, and power of truth, was also mingled a depth of feeling, scarcely indicated by his massive form and majestic deportment. "Yet," said an old man of more than eighty, who had long intimately known him, "he could sympathize with all. Ever had he a kindly word for the child, the youth, and him of hoary hairs. He could not look upon a fair landscape or fields waving with grain, without blessing God for permitting

him to live in a world so teeming with beauty." Thus, with the radiance of thought and feeling, still glowing in his deep-set eye,

"How well he fell asleep!

Like some grand river widening toward the sea,

Calmly and grandly, silently and deep,

Life joined eternity."

The capacity of the Duke of Wellington as a counsellor in all matters of state, a wise director of his own large estates, and an ornament in society, was as great at eighty-five, as during any previous period. His bodily activity and powers of endurance were also remarkable, though in boyhood his constitution was pronounced extremely delicate. More than once I have observed with delight his arrival at the House of Lords on some wintry morning, on horseback, when, throwing his reins to the single servant who attended him, he would proceed with vigorous step, and cheek brightened by exposure to the keen air, up those long flights of stairs, which in the old parliament building, were formidable to younger feet.

One evening he was seized while in his place, with sudden illness, like a premonition of paralysis. In leaving the house, he chanced to drop his hat, and realizing with singular clearness of mind that should he stop to regain it, the rush of blood through the brain might be dangerously quickened, passed on without it, holding his head in its usually very upright position. One of the peers, noticing his departure, anxiously followed and finding he had no carriage in attendance, induced him to accept his own, and return home. For two or three days bulletins were issued from Apsley House, to allay the anxiety of the people, with whom he was an idol. Then again appearing in his accustomed parliamentary seat, he sustained some pending resolution with a brief and clear speech, proving that indomitable energy and strength of will which pervaded even the latest period of his existence.

England is still happy in the protracted light shed upon her councils, by heads that

wear the silver crown of age. At seventy-six, Lord Brougham speaks much and well; Lords Lansdowne and Aberdeen at threescore and ten, are eminent ministers of state; and Lord Lyndhurst, the son of our own artist Copley, is in his eighty-second year, hale and vigorous, able to take an active part in the discussion of the most intricate public affairs, and ranked by good judges among the greatest of living orators.

Born in the same year with Lord Lyndhurst, and in the same fair city of Boston, the Hon. Josiah Quincy still exhibits unbroken powers of mind and body. The pen retains its force that traced in early life the memorial of his illustrious father, and afterward gave to our country, beside other valued works, a history in two volumes of her most ancient seat of learning, Harvard University, over which he had himself presided with honor for more than sixteen years. The fervid eloquence which on the floor of Congress, as well as on so many civic occasions, cast forth

its bold metaphors and coruscations of wit, is not yet extinguished. It is probably an unprecedented fact that at the age of more than fourscore, he should have been urged to accept a nomination to the mayoralty of his native city, an office which he had held thirty years before; leaving at his retirement indelible marks of his taste and efficiency in the financial prosperity, the humane institutions, the noble enterprises and elegant structures of this Athens of New England.

I had the privilege of seeing him the past summer, at his delightful country residence in Quincy, superintending the minute and perfectly balanced policies of his rural domain, and entertaining his guests with that fine blending of hilarity and dignity peculiar to the true gentlemen of the old school. It was a pleasure to look at his erect form, healthful complexion, and what is still more remarkable in our changeful climate, an entire set of white teeth which the art of the dentist had never interpolated. Surrounded by the sweet-

est filial affections, the man whom Everett had pronounced the "ornament of the forum, the senate and the academy," gracefully exchanged the pursuits of Cicero for those of Cincinnatus.

Residing at the same time of which I have spoken, on his fair estate at Brookline, in the vicinity of Boston, but since transferred to a higher state of existence, was Col. Thomas H. Perkins, in his ninetieth year. It was a source of exulting pleasure, while abroad, to see him arrive in London, with unalloyed spirits, an energetic and excellent traveler, both by sea and land, though then on the confines of fourscore. The voyage, from which so many young persons shrink, was to him no obstacle; indeed, he afterward repeated it, enjoying the changeful and boisterous scenery of ocean, as when in his prime.

His munificence, with its living rays, brightened until life's sunset. His sympathies for the sightless had been expressed by such large bounties, among others, the gift of a

mansion, valued at forty thousand dollars, that the institute for their instruction was incorporated by the name of the "Perkins Asylum for the Blind." Truly was it said of him by Mr. Stevenson, at an assemblage of the merchants of Boston, whose profession he had so honorably represented throughout a long life :

"Literature, science and art, each received his homage and his sacrifices; but his chosen altar was in the temple of charity. No story of distress fell upon his ear, without making his manly heart throb to the overflow of tears. It was not weakness, but greatness in him. Those tears were the mingled offspring of sorrow and of joy; sorrow for suffering, and joy that he could do something to alleviate it.

"His full heart kept his full hand open."

A touching scene occurred in Fanueil Hall, the year previous to his death. Daniel Webster, speaking there with fervid eloquence, of the liberal aid that had been rendered to the cause of education, morality, want and woe,

by the affluence of Boston, alluded personally to the venerable Colonel Perkins, then seated near him on the platform.

“Will he rise at my request,” he exclaimed, “and show his benevolent countenance to the people?”

He who had been of old distinguished by a lofty form and kingly beauty, stood up in the feebleness of hoary time. Three cheers, into which the heart of grateful thousands were merged, rent the concave. And yet three more followed.

Then the great orator said with trembling lip:

“God bless him! He is an honor to his city, an honor to his state, an honor to his country. His memory will be perfumed by his benevolent actions, and go down a sweet odor to our children’s children.”

Still traversing the streets of Boston, in his eighty-third year, regardless of winter’s cold, or summer’s heat, may be seen the venerable missionary, the Rev. Charles Cleveland, intent

on deeds of mercy. The orphan, so often overlooked in the world's great strife, the suffering widow, the poor emigrant, with his sick stranger-heart, hear, approaching their desolate attic, or dark, damp cellar, a tireless foot, and are cheered by the blessed smile of one who like the aged apostle John, has concentrated all duty in the precept to "love one another." In a school for infants, under the superintendence of his wife, he manifests continual interest, and by affectionate deportment, and kind counsel to all, without distinction of sect, shows the perpetual play of those hallowed sunbeams that repel the depression of age, and herald an unclouded day.

In the department of editorial labor, whose unresting, keen-eyed research, is rewarded in our age and country, by such immense influence over public opinion, there have been instances of the long and prosperous endurance of the severe tax it imposes, both on mind and body. Among these, the Hon. Theodore

Dwight, was eminently distinguished. A native of Massachusetts, he resided the greater part of his life in Connecticut and New York, and conducted in both of the last-named states, different weekly periodicals, for the space of half a century. He also stood a faithful sentinel at that unslumbering post, the head of a daily newspaper in the city of New York, of extensive circulation. His fine literary taste did not confine itself to editorial articles, but in consecutive works, as well as on the floor of Congress, he was appreciated by his countrymen. Age did not dim his intellect, or his remarkable colloquial powers. He continued to write with the same rapidity and acuteness that had marked his early prime, the messenger often taking the pages wet with ink to the waiting press. Well do I remember the radiance of his expressive black eye, when those coruscations of wit kindled, which eighty-two winters had not quelled, or when the smile of earnest friend-

ship, or hallowed affection, lighted up a face beautiful to the last.

We sometimes see in every grade and profession, instances of protracted usefulness, mingling with that hopeful, cheerful temperament, which is supposed to appertain to the earlier periods of life. This is illustrated in the following passages from one of those letters with which Grant Thorburn, the octogenarian florist, occasionally interests the public, through the medium of our various periodicals.

“NEW YORK, February 18, 1854.

“This day I enter on my eighty-second year; my health as good, my appetite as good, I relish my food as well, and I sleep as well, as when in my thirtieth year; and for this, I *thank* the *Giver* of all *Good*. The sceptic may sneer and the fool may laugh, it is but the crackling of thorns under a pot. You may call this egotism, or any ism that you please, but I think that ingratitude is worse than the sin of witchcraft. ‘What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits?’

“For the last sixty years, I have been only one day confined to my dwelling by sickness. Seventeen of these

summers were spent in the city, when yellow fever, like a Turkish plague, made our streets desolate, and strong men dropped like grass beneath the scythe of the mower. The doctors of law, physic and divinity, the board of health, the mayor and the ancient men of the city, all affirmed that the fever was contagious. If so, I have a higher Power than *Chance* to thank for the preservation of myself and family—for neither my wife, myself, nor any of my thirteen children, were ever affected by this fatal disease. The exemption was the more remarkable, as I spent much of my time in the chambers of death and at the sick-bed of the dying.

“In the dreadful fever of 1798, from the 15th to the 22d of September, I had seven patients. They lay in three different wards near half a mile apart. I traveled day and night, from one house to another, they having none to give them a cup of cold water, myself excepted. Four of them died; three recovered; thousands died alone.

“I will narrate in eighty minutes my journey of twice forty years through the wilderness of this world. Many, and full of *good* have been the days of my pilgrimage. When I left Scotland in April, 1794, I was in my twenty-second year. The amount of my education was to read the Bible and write my own name. Previous to this, I had never been twenty miles from the house wherein I

was born, and, with regard to men and their manners, I was as ignorant as a babe.

“The first night I slept on shore in America, was on the 17th of June, in an open garret, with my head within eighteen inches of the *shingle roof*, my ship’s matrass spread on the floor. The night was hot. A thunder storm arose at midnight—the rain descended—the floods beat on that frail roof, and great was the terror of my heart. The lightning flashed—the thunder rolled ; I had never seen or heard the like in Scotland, and I wished myself at *hame* again. Sleep fled from mine eyes, and slumber from my eyelids. I rose at daybreak—head-ache, heart-ache—and my spirits sunk down to my heels. Being a stranger, I was loth to disturb the family by going forth so early ; to amuse two listless hours, I opened my case of books to spread them on the floor ; as they had been fourteen weeks in the hold of the vessel, I feared they were mildewed. On the top, lay a small pocket Bible ; it was placed there by the hands of my pious father. I opened the book. ‘My son,’ met my eye. For a moment, I thought my father spoke. I read to the end of the chapter—it was the third of Proverbs. It is near sixty years since that morning, but, at every cross-road, when not knowing whither to turn, to the right hand or the left, on referring to this chapter, I found written, ‘This is the way, walk ye in it.’

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“Whether I shall see another birth-day, or whether I shall see another Sabbath, it matters not. I know He will keep what I have committed to his charge.”

It would be well if cheering social intercourse were more cultivated among those who share in the sympathies of many years. A lady of ninety-three, in one of the villages of Massachusetts, lately entertained at her tea-table, a party of seven friends of both sexes, whose ages ranged from seventy to eighty-six. True satisfaction and a decorous hilarity marked the festival. Much had they to say, for their united experience covered an area of six hundred and fifty years. Rural employments had probably contributed to preserve their health; for all were dwellers upon their own farms, within the vicinity of a square mile, so that neighborly intimacy gave a zest to their intercourse, and no winter of age had been allowed to obstruct the avenues of friendship.

It is desirable that the lambent light of happiness should beam from the countenance

and life of those who have long set a good example, thus making virtue attractive, and dispelling the dread which the young feel of becoming old.

Is not the parting sun beautiful in a wintry landscape? The pure snow-hillocks wear a faint rose-crown, and the trees glitter in their frost-work drapery, as if for a birth-night.

Does any one ask how this "house of our pilgrimage" may be illumined, when shadows steal around, and perchance, those that "look out of the windows are darkened?" Are there not some dwellings which are lighted from above? We would fain have a skylight that shall not fail us; one that we can look up to, and be glad. We are not satisfied with a cold lustre in Memory's halls, or with a solitary star-beam.

Can we not have a fire on the hearth, when winter gathers around us? Yes, we will keep love in our hearts, while they beat, that there may be warmth, as well as radiance.

Thus, may our day of life draw toward its

close. At "evening-time may it be light." In thy light, O Father of our spirits, may we see light; that walking in love here below, we may come at last, in thy good time, to that glorious world, where there is no more night, and where the sunbeam of love is eternal.

CHAPTER XIII.

About Money.

Ye who hold
Proud tenantry in earth, and call your lands
By your own names, and lock your coffer'd gold
From him who for a bleeding Saviour's sake
Doth ask a part,—whose shall those treasures be,
When like the grass-blade smit by autumn-frost,
Ye fall away?

It is a mournful thought that men should become more attached to earthly possessions when about to leave them, or grasp them with so great intensity that the final separation must be forcible and afflictive.

But is this statement true? Do such cases often occur? If so, are there no remedies?

As we are creatures of habit, adhesiveness undoubtedly gathers strength from time.

Since what we have been accustomed to do, or to see, becomes unconsciously interwoven with our existence, so what we have been accustomed to have and to hold, may grow closer to our hearts as life recedes, causing those who in youth were merely prudent, to be at last, the victims of avarice. Still, the extreme of this passion is not often witnessed, inasmuch as a miser is a marked creature, held up for observation and comment, both in passing life and in history.

All the subtle talents of Mazarin, were not able to gild his rapacity, or hide it from the contempt of coming ages. The solemn warning of his confessor, that to purchase peace of conscience, he must make restitution of unjust gains, failed to overcome his insatiable habit of hoarding. The frank assurance of his physician, that though but just upon the verge of sixty, the revolution of two brief moons, was the utmost limit of his days, embittered with terror both his waking and sleeping moments. Then, his two hundred millions of livres

passed before him, in review, each one as dear as ever. To enrich his relatives, the haughty family of Mancini, was probably an excuse made by the wily cardinal, for his unquelled avarice, but the root was in the love of it. Some rare gems, and singularly precious treasures, were placed in bags beneath his pillow. After struggles of deadly anguish, which increasing disease induced, he stretched his weak, emaciated hands to feel if they were still there. The fearful Spoiler, drawing every hour more near, he might have apostrophized in the words ascribed to one of England's great and unhappy statesmen.

“If thou be’st death, I’ll give a nation’s treasure,
Enough to purchase such another island,
So thou wilt let me live and feel no pain.”

Other extreme cases might be cited, but this is not our object. It is rather to recommend such antidotes as are the most obvious, if we admit that avarice is a disease indigenous to life in its decline.

The first prescription would be, *pay all*

debts. There is religion in it. If we are using, or have the name of possessing anything for which the owner has not been fully remunerated, let us lose no time in rendering adequate compensation. It is better at all times to do without what we cannot justly afford to purchase, than avail ourselves of what literally belongs to another: and the weight of undischarged obligation, grows heavier as we draw nearer our own final account. It is at all times a clog to the free spirit, a yoke that bows down independence of thought and purpose. "Poverty without debt is independence," says an Arabian proverb. The blessed Founder of our faith, to his command to "render to all their dues," added the force of his own example, in the payment of tribute to the Roman ruler. An old author has quaintly remarked, "Even when Christ borrowed Peter's boat to preach a sermon out of, he paid him for the same with a great draught of fishes." The wise monarch of Israel attaches the epithet of wickedness to

that too common forgetfulness of equity, "borrowing and paying not again." The spirit of acquisitiveness is a temptation to vice. It confuses the simple principles of right and wrong. The fearful frauds that mark modern days, and our own country, bid us to strengthen every foundation of equity, and beware of the spirit of

" These feverish times,
That putting the *how-much before the how*,
Cry like the daughters of the horse-leech, *give*."

How forcible were the words of the eloquent Patrick Henry, on his death-bed, to his children, "If I could will to give you the Christian religion, how gladly would I do so; for with this, and without any earthly possession, you would be infinitely rich: without it, though with all else that the heart can wish, you would be miserably poor."

The apostolic injunction, "Owe no man anything, except to love one another," gathers strength and significance, with every added year. The luxury of giving, cannot

be fairly enjoyed, while debts remain unliquidated. "Be just before you are generous," is a precept as admirable for its innate truth, as for its garb of simplicity. Punctual and cheerful payment of wages to the laborer is a form of benevolence. To withhold hard-earned dues, or to render them churlishly, is anti-christian. A philanthropist, who in his business employed many operatives, was in the habit of paying them all at stated periods, and of adding, if possible, some kind word of counsel, saying it was a "good time to sow a good seed, when there was a sunbeam to quicken it."

Repress the spirit of accumulation. This has been said to increase with years. Yet the faculties which it calls into exercise are adverse to the tranquillity which is usually coveted in life's decline. Its progress must, therefore, be traced to the force of a habit, against which reason remonstrates.

The fever of speculation, the eagerness of gain, the disappointment of loss, all the in-

tense gradations from exultation to despair, are inapposite and hurtful to a being who cannot long partake that for which he barter so much; and whose wisdom is rather to seek wealth in the country where he is about to dwell. The value of every species of property depends upon the period in which it may be rendered available, or upon its probability of continuance. A bond about to expire, a house ready to fall, an estate which the mortgagee might at any moment claim, would not be coveted as investments by the prudent. To the aged all earth's possessions, being deficient in the article of *time*, which is the breath of their nostrils, are far less worthy of fervent search, than when in early prime, they were encouraged by hope to associate them with a long term of years. Such meditations, probably, induced a man of laborious and successful acquisition to say, "I will add no more to my capital hereafter; and the surplus of all my income shall be the Lord's."

Cultivate the habit of giving. This great

pleasure may have been reserved for later years as a compensation for those enjoyments which time has taken away. The aged, by their position, are peculiarly solicited to make trial whether it is not better to give than to receive.

There is force in that quaint epitaph,

“What I saved I lost,
What I spent I had,
What I gave I kept.”

“I think I am rich enough,” said Pope, after his writings became productive, “to give away one hundred pounds a year. I would not crawl upon the earth without doing a little good. I will enjoy the pleasure of giving what I have to give by doing it while I am alive, and seeing others enjoy it. I should be ashamed to leave enough for a monument if there was a friend in want above ground.”

Many examples might be cited were time and space mine, where similar resolutions

have been adopted as the motto and guide of life, until the spirit blessing all whom it met was wafted by gratitude below, to songs of melody above. Such an one has been just removed from among us. Anson G. Phelps, Esq., of New York, who by his own unaided industry, became the possessor of a large fortune, through untiring deeds of philanthropy kept his heart tender and open to the wants and woes of mankind. Time, money and sympathy were with him ever ready for the claims of beneficence, whether large or small. To the Being who had prospered his labors, he thus considered himself accountable, and this conscientious discharge of duty was blessed as one of his highest joys. Until more than threescore and ten years had passed over him, he attended with undiminished judgment to the concerns of a great commercial establishment, and the interests of many associated and individual forms of benevolence. Amid the sufferings and languor of decline his mind peacefully resting

upon that God whom from youth he had served, still occupied itself in plans of liberality. Within two or three days of his death, while arranging for a donation of several thousand dollars to some religious design, a beloved one expressed fear that it might too much tax his feeble strength and proposed that it should be left to the care of others, but he replied, "My business has long been to *save that I might give*, and I wish to continue it while life lasts." More than half a million is dedicated in his will to the charities which he had long patronized, and beside other bequests to his twenty-two grandchildren, was the sum of \$5000 for each, the interest of which was to be annually devoted to deeds of religious bounty. Thus did he seek, even when he should be numbered with the dead, to lead his descendants in those paths of Christian charity which he had loved. Among the objects of philanthropy in his own city, the Asylum for the Blind had shared largely in his bounties and sympathies.

Its inmates, at his frequent visits, gathered around him to take his hand as that of a father. Their thrilling and tuneful voices poured forth the tearful melody of a hymn at his thronged funeral obsequies.

“How those blind children will miss him!” said the clergyman in his address, at the church where for many years he had worshipped. “They never saw his benignant face, but they well knew the kind voice of their benefactor. How do all the blessed affections of humanity, how do all the sacred hopes of religion, delight to hover over a good man’s grave.”

Another counsel which we venture to give, is to superintend personally, as far as possible, such plans of benevolence as are approved and adopted. This is true economy. We best understand our own designs. It may not always be feasible, perfectly to incorporate them with the mind of another. “He who uses the ministry of many agents, says a pro-

found moralist, may be by some of them misunderstood and by others deceived."

Why should we not enjoy the pleasure of dispensing our own gifts? "Come, please to give us something," said a shrewd nurse to an invalid and rather parsimonious old lady; "give us all something *now* and see us look pleasant while you are alive." There was philosophy here as well as policy.

Illustrations of this position are so numerous that it is embarrassing and almost invidious to select.

The late Hon. Samuel Appleton, of Boston, who lived to almost the verge of ninety, was distinguished by the practical efficiency of charity. The exercise of a clear judgment kept pace with his persevering liberality. In carrying out such designs as he decided to adopt, the amount of his benevolence often exceeded \$25,000 annually. So long did he pursue this blessed husbandry, that he was enabled to see ripening fruits from the germs he had planted in the sterile soil of poverty and ignorance.

It is pleasant to observe how his discriminating and unimpaired mind simply and sentimentously expressed itself, in presenting a donation of ten thousand dollars to a venerated scholastic institution.

“It affords me much pleasure to have it in my power to do something for the only College in my native State, which has done so much to establish a sound literary character in the country.

“Dartmouth has done her full proportion in educating for the pulpit, the bar, the healing art, and the senate, good and great men, who have done honor to their names, to the College, and the Country.

“May New Hampshire long continue to send forth from her literary emporium, men who will dispense among their fellows, religion, law, and the other arts and sciences, in simplicity, purity, and truth.”

Though few have the amount of wealth to dispense, which fell to the lot of this unwearied philanthropist, yet the zeal which determined as far as possible, to be its own executor, is imitable. Those who trust to others, even during life, are not sure of having

their plans executed. Much less can this be expected when they are dead. Agents may fail or betray. They may be absorbed with their own business and ours be delayed or forgotten. A large portion of testamentary charities perhaps never reach the most available points of the object which their donors contemplated.

The forms of benevolence change. Those objects which twenty years since were prominent, are now in a measure obsolete, or superseded by others. If we have selected one which seems fitting and feasible, let us see to it ourselves. Our heirs will probably have concerns enough of their own, and not care to be burdened with ours also.

Methinks I hear a murmured rejoinder, "there are various forms of charity I should like to patronize, but I must save for my children, and I have poor relations."

These are the key-tones which covetousness has struck for ages, and with such force as often to bewilder itself. There is in them

a semblance of justice and of conscience, while the root is at best a concealed selfishness. The hoarding for descendants, which at first view seems paternal and amiable, may be hurtful to those whose benefit it contemplates. The expectation of wealth may paralyze their industry. Its possession may check their sympathies, perhaps endanger their souls. If we adopt the charity that *begins* at home, let us see that it does not become bed-ridden and *die* at home. For wherever there is one of God's family who is in sorrow, or ignorance, or needs bread or a garment, or is sick, or in prison to vice or despair, let the same be to us as our "brother and sister and mother."

The possession of property involves an obligation of stewardship, both to the Giver and to our fellow-creatures; an obligation which receding life renders more imperative and sacred. We would not stand before our Judge with rust upon our souls, derived from the gold that perishes. Of its unrighteous

gathering, its unjust detention, or unkind denial to any in the hour of need, we would be guiltless in the dread day of account.

I have somewhere seen four homely rules which comprise true wisdom, and whose observance would prevent much remorse :

- “ 1. Do all the good you can ;
2. In all the ways you can ;
3. To all the people you can ;
4. Just as long as you can.”

There are some who in their desires to do good are discouraged if they must operate on a small scale, or be bounded by a narrow circle. They erroneously associate large benefactions, with the pure element of benevolence. Such persons may be consoled by Mahomet's explanation of good deeds to our race. His definition embraced the wide circle of all possible kindness. Every good act he would say is charity. Your smiling in your brother's face is charity ; an exhortation of your fellow-man to virtuous deeds is equal to alms-giving, your putting a wanderer

in the right road is charity ; your assisting the blind is charity ; your removing stones, and thorns, and other obstructions, from the road, is charity ; your giving water to the thirsty is charity. A man's true wealth hereafter is the good he does in this world to his fellow-man. When he dies, people will say, " what property has he left behind him ? " But the angels will ask, " what good deeds has he sent before him ? "

And now, if any of us who have together mused on this subject, realize that the time is short, let us the more strenuously fulfill deferred resolutions and undischarged duties. Let us pay what we owe, and break the slavery of money getting, and study the science of charity in the love of it, and learn the joy of being our own almoners. For to all, whether young or old, who are still seeking the good things of this transitory state, the warning of an ancient writer is appropriate :

" Build your nest upon no tree here, for

God hath sold the whole forest unto Death ;
and every tree whereupon we would rest is
ready to be cut down. Therefore, let us flee,
and mount up, and make our abode among
the cliffs, and dwell in the sides of the Great
Everlasting Rock."

CHAPTER XIV.

The Amenities.

“He prayeth best, who loveth best.”

COLERIDGE.

It is sometimes the case, that good and kind-hearted people, imbibe on certain points, a rigidity of opinion, or an undue expectation of conformity, which is both disagreeable and inexpedient. It is a kind of despotism, against which enlightened intellect revolts. I am not ignorant that it has been numbered among the tendencies of age, though I have never observed it to be exclusively confined to that period. On the contrary, I have seen and admired in many old persons, an increase of candor, a reluctance to condemn, and a mitigation of all austerity, like the mellowing of

rich fruit, ripe for the harvest. Those amiable friends seemed to have taken the advice of the clear-minded and benevolent Franklin, not to tarry in the basement rooms of the Christian edifice, but to make haste and get into the upper chamber, which is warm with the sunlight of charity.

While we concede liberty of judgment to others, we should use courtesy in the expression of our own. It is both fitting and wise, that dissenting opinions should be wrapped in gentle speech. Were it always so, much of the bitterness of strife would evaporate, and controversies lulled into harmony, make only a stronger music to the ear of humanity.

If dogmatism has been considered a concomitant of age, in former times, it would surely be well to dismiss it in our own. The world itself has so changed its aspects, capacities and modes of action, during the last half century, that many of the conclusions which then seemed rational and well-established, must now be either reconsidered, or counted

obsolete. Then, she was in a manner home-bred, and when she went abroad, it was comparatively with the pace of a tortoise. She sate in the evening, by the light of a tallow-candle, and read standard old books, and remembered what was in them, and who wrote them.

Now, she is in haste, and can admit but few lasting impressions. She rides on the steam, and talks by lightning. She reveals new agencies that bewilder her children, and astonish herself. Like the mystic form in the Apocalypse, she "is clothed with the sun, and hath the moon under her feet." Her "stones are the place of sapphires, and she hath dust of gold."

So many new elements, or unknown combinations, have been, or are being discovered, in this our planet, that a common, old-fashioned person could scarcely be more at a loss, on the ring of Saturn, or among the belts of Jupiter. It is no wonder that those who founded conclusions on ancient premises,

should be at fault, where there is no precedent. The great principles of right and wrong, must, indeed, ever remain the same ; but the rapid movement, and transmutation of passing objects, confuse the old modes of reasoning.

We, therefore, of the ancient regime, should forbear strongly to press preconceived opinions, and should form new ones with peculiar modesty. For we are not certain of what we once supposed we well understood, and must solace ourselves with the assertion of Bacon, that “he is the wisest man, who is the most susceptible of alteration.” Still, we will not embark on a sea of doubt, but regard with leniency our fellow-voyagers, as they steer their various courses, over time’s troubled billows,—as we hope, toward the same great haven of rest.

These amenities mingling with our religious belief, should repel bigotry. That we should be attached to the form of faith that has long sustained and solaced us, is natural and com-

mendable. But if there has been ever a period in which we were inclined to think that "we alone were the people, and wisdom must die with us," it is time to dismiss the assumption. For among the many good lessons that age has taught us, should be toleration and humility. Through much discipline and many sorrows, it instructs us that true religion is not a wall to shut out our fellow-beings, nor a balance in which to weigh grains of doctrine, nor a rack, on which to stretch varying opinions, nor a javelin to launch at different complexions of faith, but "peace, and love, and good-will to men." It should have enabled us to make progress in the last and highest grace, benignant and saintly charity.

Faith has been our teacher, ever since we first lisped, with childish utterance, "in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Hope, as far as she draws nutriment from earth, can have little more for the aged, either in vision

or fruition. But Charity, our last, most patient teacher, will ever find some beautiful precept, some holy exercise, till "this mortal shall put on immortality."

Yet though age should soften all hostilities of opinion, as the setting sun softens the landscape, there are occasionally some minds of antagonistic character, whose controversial tastes gather strength. With them, the beatitude which the gospel promises to peacemakers, is overshadowed by the ambition of controlling the opinions of others. Such ideas harmonize rather with the policy of an Israelitish usurper, than of the meek and lowly Redeemer. "Is it peace, Jehu? What hast thou to do with peace? *Turn thee, behind me.*"

But how often is the disposition and power of guiding others, associated with the most eminent liberality and love. Hear the noble suffrage of John Wesley, when advanced years had fully instructed his large mind and heart.

"My soul loathes the frothy food of con-

tending opinions. Give me solid, substantial religion. Give me a humble lover of God, and of man, full of mercy and good fruits, laying himself out in works of faith, in the patience of hope, and the labor of love. My soul shall be with such Christians, wheresoever they are, and whatsoever doctrines they may hold."

"There is no way," says the venerable Bishop White, "in which the ministerial office may be more useful than in raising the harmonizing voice of religion, to allay the jealousies and resentments that result from the interfering opinions and interests of men in civil life. But, does it appear, that from the infancy of Christendom to the present day, this blessed work has been promoted by ecclesiastical politicians? Have they not been rather the fomenters of strife? No wonder; because either the lust of power, or the spirit of faction, drove them into temptation."

"Men who *think*, will *differ*," writes the

learned Dr. Priestly, "but true Christians will ever be candid."

"I do not wish," said Rowland Hill, with his characteristic pleasantry, "the walls of separation between different orders of Christians destroyed, but only a little lowered, that we may shake hands over them."

"The nearer we approximate to universal love," said the large-minded, large-hearted Robert Hall, "the higher we ascend in the scale of Christian excellence."

We blame the folly of the Egyptian Queen, yet overlook their greater madness, who dissolve in the sharp acid of contention, the priceless pearl of charity, the soul's chief wealth, and venture to stand in their reckless poverty before a Judge who requireth love, and the deeds of love, as a test of loyalty, and a shield from wrath. In His dread presence, we must all appear, and appeal only as sinners, having "left undone the things that we ought to have done, and done the things that we ought not to have done." From this

parity of condition should spring brotherhood of feeling. Hand in hand let us kneel before the throne of the Pardoner.

A simple, significant incident was once related, in the discourse of a Scottish divine.

Two cottagers, dwelling under the same roof, became alienated. It so happened that both were employed at the same time in thatching their tenement. Each heard the sound of the other's hammer, and saw the progress of his work, yet took no friendly notice.

But at length, as they approached nearer, they looked in each other's face and chanced to smile. That smile was a messenger from heaven. With it, came the thought how much better it would be for those who dwell under one roof, to be at peace in their hearts.

Then they shook hands. They said, "*Let us be friends,*" and a new, great happiness became theirs.

Are we not, all of us, dwellers under God's roof, and as Christians engaged in the same

work? Is not the silent lapse of years bringing us nearer and nearer toward each other? Let us then press on in love, until by His grace, our thatching well done, we meet on the top at last, and mingle in with the joy of angels.

CHAPTER XV.

The Pleasures of Winter.

“ And when the tinting of the Autumn leaves
Had faded from its glory,—we have sat
By the good fires of winter, and rejoiced
Over the fulness of the gathered sheaf.”

WILLIS.

WHAT a singular subject! The *pleasures* of winter. And what may they be? Some, with whom the imagery of frost and snow predominates, will be ready to say that it has none.

Surely it has been the most ill-treated season, decried by almost every one that could wield a pen or weave a couplet. The poets have been in league against it from time immemorial. Still it has some very respectable, shall I say desirable characteris-

tics? It has not the fickleness of spring, whose blossoms so soon fall, nor the enervation of summer, when the strong men bow themselves, nor the imperious exactions of autumn, when the in-gathering is a weariness, and may be a disappointment.

Do not speak with too much scorn of a wintry landscape. The wreaths of smoke rising high into the clear, blue skies, the pure, white covering under which nature reposes, the sparkling of the sinuous streams, where the graceful skaters glide, the groups of children, gathering rosier cheeks and merrier spirits from the heightened oxygen of the atmosphere, give to a winter morning in our sunny latitude cheering excitement.

Did you ever chance to look upon the glorious Niagara in the garniture of winter? And did not its solemn, solitary majesty, impress you more deeply, than when the green, waving woods, and the busy, gazing throngs, divided the absorbing sentiment?

Is not the wintry eve sweet, with its warm

fires and bright lights, when families gather in a closer circle, and better love each other? Heart springs to heart, with fewer obstacles than in the more discursive seasons, when the foot is tempted to roam and the eye to wander. The baby crows louder after its father because it can sit longer on his knee. The youth has a lengthened tale for his lady-love, and the storm passes by unheard. Pleasant talk, and sweet song, and loud reading, vary the scene of household delights. Added cheerfulness and love are among the treasures of the wintry evening.

Shall we not avail ourselves of these hints, when the winter of life comes? Shall we not light up the cheerful lamp, and put more fuel on the flame in our cold hearts? They need not go out, though some are gone who were wont to feed them with fresh oil. We will keep love to our race, alive, till the last. Let its embers throw their warmth even into the dark valley. Yes, we will carry those

embers with us, and relight them where they can never wane or expire.

The young are said to love winter. Let us strive to make them love us, when we become the personification of winter. We will redouble our offices of kindness, and our powers of entertainment, and see if we cannot melt the ice that has collected between us.

“Young men,” says Lord Bacon, “are to be happy by hope, and the old by memory.” Yes, with us, are the pictures of the past, the winter gallery, whose landscapes fade not, and whose fountains still freshly murmur. Memory! she who hath sifted and winnowed the harvest of life, that she may know the true wheat. Memory, who hath stood by us when Hope and Love have so often rung the death-knell, and forsaken us,—may we be happy through her? The Lord be thanked if it is so. If, in looking back on all the way wherein He hath led us, she presents a predominance of correct motive, of earnest obedience, of forgiven sin, let us strike that

key-tone of praise which shall re-echo through eternity.

Among the prominent joys of life's winter, are those of faith; a nearness, and shadowing forth of things unseen. It was at a festal gathering of the old and young, that the question was once proposed,—which season of human life was the happiest. It was freely discussed, with varying opinions. Then the guests decided that their host, a man of fourscore, should be the umpire. Pointing to a neighboring grove, he replied, "When vernal airs call forth the first buds, and yonder trees are covered with blossoms, I think how beautiful is spring. When summer clothes them with rich foliage, and birds sing among the branches, I say how beautiful is summer. When they are loaded with fruit, or bright with the hues of early frost, I feel how beautiful is autumn. But in sere winter, when there are neither verdure or fruit, I look through the leafless boughs as I could never do before, and see the *stars shine*."

Stars of our God! beam more brightly into our souls, through this wintry atmosphere. For our home is near. And notwithstanding the Great Philosopher hath said that the old can be happy only through memory, we will be happy through hope also, yea, through that hope which hath no mixture of earth, the "hope that maketh not ashamed, and which is as an anchor to the soul."

CHAPTER XVI.

A New Existence.

" Oh soldier of the Cross, away with dreams !
Bright on thy brow, eternal glory streams,
In faith, in love, in wisdom's stedfast mind.
Arise and leave this moonlight camp behind."

BISHOP BURGESS.

IF it is wrong to disparage the season of age, which so few reach, over the hidden pitfalls of time, it is unwise to regard only with reluctance and terror, the transition to another life. To depart from this world, is as necessary to the completion of our pilgrimage as to have entered it; a point of existence not to be evaded, a consummation of what was here begun.

Do we not bear within ourselves, the essential argument and proof of future exist-

ence? Even a heathen shall beautifully answer this question, the clear-minded Xenophon. "When I consider the boundless activity of our minds, the remembrance we have of things past, our foresight of what is to come, when I reflect on those noble discoveries and improvements that those minds have achieved, I am persuaded, and out of all doubt, that a nature which hath in itself such excellent things cannot possibly be mortal."

Is not this brief life so fitted and adjusted to another, as to form but one existence? Like apartments in a well-arranged mansion, they harmonize and are in symmetry. May we not pass from one to the other, with confidence in the Builder and Master of the Mansion? If the passage be dark, is there not a lamp at each extremity, placed there by His hand who "hath conquered Death, and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel?"

A saintly man drawing near his last hour,

said to me, "That other world is as clear, and as near, as the entrance into the next room." Raising his emaciated hand, with a great brightness in his eye, he added, "I had rather enter that next room than to remain longer here, for in that pleasant room are more of my friends than in this."

"*Why are we spared so long?*" is sometimes the half-murmuring question of the aged, for whom the novelties of life are extinguished.

The remark is an implication of unerring wisdom. As long as breath is lent, there will be some duty to perform, some enjoyment to partake, some right word to be spoken, some prayer to be sent upward, some point of Christian example to be made complete. It would be well to bear in our hearts the motto of a poet,

"How well is ours:—how long, permit to Heaven."

Were our fears and anxieties less devoted to the circumstances of leaving this life, than to the danger of failing in those duties on

which the welfare of a future one depends, it were better for us now and ever after.

The dark-winged angel who is appointed to summon us to a new existence, is often arrayed with imaginary terrors, and represented as the foe of our race. A quaint writer has recommended that we should "keep on good terms with Death." It would be indeed wise to make him our friend, to speak no ill of him, to be ready for him, and to meet him without fear.

"I am dying," said Washington, when a sharp sickness of twenty-four hours cut off his span of sixty-seven years, "but I am not afraid to die." Sometimes a new and strange courage comes to the Christian with death, though he might "all his lifetime have been subject to bondage." The diffident, who shrank ever from his fellow-man, has been heard to open his mouth boldly, and speak beautiful things of the world to come. To the weak-spirited and oppressed, he appears as a deliverer. Tyranny hath power no more.

The fears and hopes that were born in dust, and dwelt there, fade away. The eye that grows dim to these lower skies, kindles with the glorious liberty of the children of God."

Friends! brethren and sisters, already far advanced on the journey to another life, who

"Nightly pitch the moving tent
A day's march nearer home,"

are we afraid? Why should we be? Who provided for us, before we entered this state of probation? Whose eye "saw our substance yet being imperfect?" Who took care of us when we knew Him not? Will He forget us now that we are His servants?

To loosen the bonds of affection, and depart from those who are most dear, needs the exercise of a strong, implicit faith. If there are any in that circle, whose helplessness or absorbing love render them apparently dependent on us for protection or happiness, let us endeavor serenely to leave them on the Everlasting Arm.

A statesman, during a disastrous period in the civil wars of England, being appointed to a foreign embassy, was listening to the violent tumult of a stormy sea, the night before his embarkation, and reflecting on the perilous condition of his native land, until his troubled mind forbade sleep. A confidential servant who accompanied him, perceiving his distress, said,

“Sir, do you not think that God governed the world well, before you came into it?”

“Undoubtedly.”

“Sir, do you not think He will govern it as well, when you are gone out of it?”

“Certainly.”

“Sir, pray excuse me, but do you not think that you may trust Him to govern it quite as well, while you do live?”

The reproof overcame his perturbation, who was about to undertake a tempestuous voyage, burdened with heavy cares. Its spirit might instruct us. For those, whom we contemplate leaving with such anxiety, we might

be powerless to protect if we remained behind. The calamities of life would overtake them. Sickness would smite them, and sorrow find a passage to their hearts, and we could not shield them. We could not "deliver our darling from the lion." We would, therefore, confidently trust them and ourselves to an Almighty Hand, and filled with holy faith, respond to the words of a powerful writer, "We have nothing to do with death but to defy it, to lift up our heads, and look above it. He is but the mere loosener of the cords that moor us to the shores of time, the dissolver of the cement that attaches to the things that perish in the using. What we have to do with it, is to despise it; not to prepare to meet it, but to prepare to meet our God."

Nature might herself instruct us, by the calm aspect with which she meets her own changes.

“ How quiet, shows the woodland scene !
Each flower and tree, its duty done,
Reposing in decay serene,
Like holy men when age is won,
Such calm old age, as conscience pure
And self-commanding hearts ensure,
Waiting the summons of the sky,
Content to live and not afraid to die.”

Content, and not afraid. That is a blessed Christian motto. Yet we would add still more. Should we not be *happy* to pass into whatever state of existence God shall designate ? Look at the bird. It hath gathered neither into store-house or barn. Its food hath been from the garner of the broad, green earth, and its life a music-strain. The blasts of autumn come. Its empty nest trembles amid the leafless boughs. It must speed its way to another clime.

Does it linger ? Does it doubt ? Nay, it spreads an unreluctant wing into the trackless ether.

So go thou forth, O Soul ! It is God's

universe. Thou canst not pass beyond His jurisdiction. His grace is sufficient for thee.

Living, or dying, we would obey the eloquent injunction of the prophet, to “seek Him who maketh the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning.” Let us bring our will into conformity with His will, and catch the spirit of the dying prayer of Bishop Jewel,

“Lord, now let thy servant depart in peace. Lord, suffer thy servant to come unto Thee. Lord receive my spirit.

“I have not so lived, as to be ashamed of having lived; neither do I fear death, for God is merciful. Father, Thy will be done. Thy will, I say, and not mine.

“Lo, this is my day. To-day shall I quickly come unto Thee. This day shall I see my Lord Jesus—Thou, O Lord, who hast been my only hope.”

But in what attitude shall we stand, and how shall we occupy ourselves, when the

time and strength for active service have past away? The answer is, *Wait*.

The waiting graces are beautiful. They imply readiness. We can not quietly await any great event for which we are unprepared. Let us have oil in our lamps, and cherish every gentle and holy affection.

Wait! It is an honorable service. An ancient warrior put on his armour and braced himself upright when the footstep of death stole upon him. "I have never turned my back on any foe, while I lived," said he, "and I will look the last one in the face."

Wait bravely, therefore, in Christian armour, the opening of that gate which leads to a higher existence. Wait, with a smile, the ministry of the last messenger. Ask not when he cometh, or where or in what manner. Stipulate nothing. Poor pensioner on God's free mercy, question not, distrust not. His time is the best time.

When it shall come may we have grace to let the frail tent of this body calmly fall, and

putting our hand into the pierced hand of a Redeemer, with a song of praise go forth to "the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."



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